DELPHIAN TEXT

PART EIGHT

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DELPHIAN TEXT

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PART EIGHT

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DELPHIAN TEXT

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PART VIII

MODERN DRAMA

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IN the long run relaxation is not pleasure; it is boredom. Pleasure means the brightened eye, the quickened intelligence, the braced muscle. We may work hard at dull tasks, but we will work like demons for pleasure. The same man who grumbled at a route march during the war will walk farther on his holidays. And see more. If the world is to have a drama really in the first class, the play-goer will have to coöperate, as he coöperates in the work of a holiday camp. He can't be carried on the backs of others and fed with a spoon. . . . But does the world really want a drama of the first class? Did it want steam, or electricity, till the few having stated the possibilities of these agencies, the many responded? Nothing is wanted till it is appearing; nothing is had till men have gone out to get it. And so with drama. We might have a hundred potential Shakespeares among us; we probably have. But unless we have the potential Shakespearean audience as well, not one of them will come to fruition.

—Halcott Glover: *Drama and Mankind.*

THE MODERN DRAMA OF FRANCE

By E. H. C. Oliphant

MODERN drama is a drama of realism. Its real starting point is a play that was and deserved to be a failure, the *Henriette Maréchal* of the brothers de Goncourt, presented in 1865; but the production was so poor a thing that there is nothing unreasonable in preferring the year 1869, when the first of Ibsen's social dramas in prose, *The League of Youth,* saw the light, or even 1862 when *Love's Comedy,* his first effort in that species of drama, albeit in verse, was given to the world. But prior to what may be specifically termed "the modern drama" came something to which may be given the name "semi-modern." This was entirely French, and had its birth with the production, in 1852, of *La Dame aux Camelias,* the famous courtezan play of Alexandre Dumas *fils.* The purpose and the subject are modern, but the tone, the treatment and the technique are not, nor is the language. That play was, on the whole, more old-fashioned than modern; with Augier's *Mariage d'Olympe,* staged in 1855, we find a play in which the modern elements predominated, only the language and the technique belonging to the past age. What, then, was the class of drama from which Dumas partly and Augier more thoroughly rescued the French theater?

The history of French drama during the first half of the nineteenth century is that of the swing from classicism to romanticism; that of the latter half, the record of the swing from romanticism to realism. Drama is not the only branch of art that knows such changes, nor are such revolutions in artistic taste and aim peculiar to France. Every art and almost every European nation that can boast an art of any antiquity presents us with a submergence of the classical or formal by the romantic, the romantic by the realistic or naturalistic, and the realistic by the mystic or spiritual or symbolic; and then another turn of the wheel

brings back the classical once more. Thus, in France, when Victor Hugo flung down the gauntlet of romanticism to the followers of Racine in the shape of *Hernani,* Alexandre Dumas, the elder, in non-dramatic literature, Delacroix in painting, and Berlioz in music were similarly challenging the authority of Lamartine and David and the followers of Lully. So too, when the time came to raise the banner of realism, we have not only Becque doing so in the theater, but also Zola in the novel, Courbet in painting, Chabrier in music. And, finally, when there was a reaction to mysticism on the part of Paul Claudel in drama, we find a similar reaction in the other arts in the work of Huysmans and Gustave Moreau and Debussy.

In 1852, when Dumas *fils* shook the world of the French theater, the master dramatist was held to be Eugène Scribe, the supreme exponent of the "well-made play." He was a master of plot, and a master of nothing else. Scribe died in 1861; and the same year Victorien Sardou, who was destined to be his successor, made his debut. Sardou is a more sensational Scribe, equally clever and equally superficial, the maker of first-class acting plays, without any great literary value, and with no philosophical value at all. Better than either was Eugène Labiche, who carried on the tradition of French farce-comedy, which had in so large measure derived from the Italian comedy, and to which the names of Molière, Régnier, Le Sage, Marivaux and Beaumarchais had lent so much luster. As a stylist Labiche may not compare with even the least of these; but as a humorist he fully holds his own; and it may be doubted if any of them is his equal in comic inventiveness. Sometimes he presents us with farces of extreme impropriety and explosive humor—notably *Célimare* and *Les Plus Heureux des Trois*—sometimes he is equally amusing without being in any way offensive, as in *Moi* and *La Cagnotte* and *Le Misanthrope et l'Auvergnat.* The most famous of all, and the most recommendable, if not the best, is *Le Voyage de M. Perrichon,* a thing delightful enough to be classed with the best fantastic comedies of Molière.

Into the world of the well-made play and the rollicking farce Dumas *fils* threw the provocative *Dame aux Camélias.*

This story of a courtezan was considered in its time exceedingly realistic; today it seems hopelessly sentimental and unreal. It is not a great drama; but it is a great acting play, which has kept its place on the stage because of the fine part it provides for a leading lady. The comedy whose only purpose was to amuse and the drama whose only ob ject was to excite, went down before this new class of theatrical production; but, although more purposeful, the new drama was no less theatrical than the others. In 1855 the author produced a play much finer in every way, the undoubted masterpiece among all his works, *Le Demi-monde.* It may be noted, by the way, that the term had not with Dumas the meaning that it has with us today: with him it meant only those who are exiled from society—a material difference.

In this able play, in which Dumas is at his best in playcraft, in characterization, and in dialogue, we are shown a very clever woman seeking to get into the world of respectability and failing. *Le Fils Naturel* is another masterly play, in which the author gives something of his own feelings and experiences, since he was an illegitimate son of the great Alexandre. His later dramas show a considerable falling-off, for the tendency to preach grew upon him, and his work became more and more didactic. He wrote on into the days when true realism had in large measure displaced the pseudo-realism that he had introduced to the stage, and two of his latest plays, *Denise* and *Francillon,* are among his best; but the former still presents us with the old-fashioned technique of his earliest days; and the latter, though never surpassed by him in sheer cleverness, lacks sincerity. Dumas is a person of enormous importance in the history of the modern drama; but he is not to be reckoned as being himself wholly modern.

Much the same may be said, more hesitatingly, regarding Emile Augier. This distinguished dramatist began as a writer in verse, his most noteworthy play in this medium being *L'Aventuriere* (1848). That, it will be noted, antedates the transition period which is associated with the names of Dumas and Augier. His first great work within that period is *Le Gendre de M. Poirier* (1854), which is

generally regarded as his masterpiece, though he was, in point of fact, but part-author of it. This is unquestionably the finest French pure comedy of the century, a play not unworthy to stand by the side of Molière's, a comedy in which every one of the five characters is true to life and to which no exception is to be taken on moral grounds. It is a play that can be read even today with real pleasure, because, though there is nothing that would cause it to be characterized as "modern," it is something better, in that it possesses that quality which makes us feel that a play belongs to no one period, but is true of any period.

In 1855, in *Le Mariage d'Olympe,* Augier made a long step towards modernity, getting nearer to it, in fact, than Dumas ever did. Olympe is a loose-living woman who marries into a noble family, the head of which shoots her when she invents and threatens to make public charges against a young girl. The play is unpleasant by reason of its subject, almost repellent in its treatment; yet we have to credit the author with excellent intentions as he wrote the play to counteract the evil wrought, or likely to be wrought, by the false sentimentality of *Le Dame aux Camélias.* There is no false sentiment about *Le Mariage d'Olympe.*

From this realistic melodrama (if so it may be called), Augier turned to satirical comedy, attacking contemporary society in four admirable plays, *Les Effrontés* (1861), *Le Fils de Giboyer* (1862), *Contagion* (1866) *and Lions et Renards* (1869). Of these four master-pieces, the finest is *Le Fils de Giboyer,* an admirable presentment of the evil of the Church's entry into politics. Among the dramatist's other plays must be mentioned *Au Maître Guérin,* the clever one-actor *Postscriptum,* and his last effort, *Les Fourchambault* (1878), which is not far from being his best.

Dumas and Augier are criticised with much unfairness today. They revolutionized drama by creating the thesis play. Augier was the greater of the two, if only because he sentimentalized less and preached less. If he had not so much emotional power as his rival, he had a better, a truer, though a less clever, technique, greater naturalness and a finer feeling for character. Dumas led the drama back to observation and rediscovered the comedy of man-

ners, showing human nature as affected by environment. Augier is even more markedly a forerunner of the modern drama, since he avoids theatricality and may be said to have created the drama of social criticism.

The first great French master of the realistic drama was Henry Becque, whose initial effort in this sense, his undoubted masterpiece, was *Les Corbeaux,* produced in 1882. It is an astounding piece of cynicism, but also an amazing piece of truth. The cynicism is shown in the eventual triumph of the worst of all the carrion crows who descended upon the home of a bourgeois family that has just lost its head; the truth is everywhere. It is a great play, despite the absence of plot, the poverty of construction, the lack of distinction in its dialogue and the retention of much old-fashioned technique. It is great because of the subtle development of character, the all-pervading irony, the faithful adherence to facts of life. Becque swept away all that was most unreal and conventional in the theatrical technique of the time, save that he retained the aside and the soliloquy, the old careful exposition he would have none of, preferring to plunge his auditors straight into the heart of his subject; and he dispensed with the *raisonneur,* the expositor so dear to the technical methods of Dumas *fils.* His plays have not much movement; but, though he subordinated plot, he had a thorough mastery of it, as of play-construction, when he chose to exercise it. There can be no doubt that Becque lacked something of spirituality; his characters are depicted almost brutally; he has no sympathy with them. He imagines them unlovely and shows them unlovely. He remains entirely objective, entirely impersonal. He takes no sides, but impassively photographs his people as he sees them. He is cruelly logical. He lacks charm; but it is all to his credit that he is too sincere to give us poetic flights or sham sentiment. He is not a writer of problem plays: he solves no problems, presents none. He is hardly a thinker, but rather a very skilful photographer who shows the outward manifestations of life; yet he is also the true artist who shows the soul beneath the manifestations.

Becque was a precursor in France, not in Europe, for

he had been anticipated by Ibsen; but, though his greatness is recognized today, his influence in his own time was not considerable, and Sardou and Dumas continued to dominate the scene until André Antoine arose to bring the naturalistic drama to the forefront. Antoine was not a writer: he was an actor, a theatrical manager, a producer. As late as his twenty-ninth year he was an employe of the Paris Gas Company, enjoying a salary of $350 a year, and it was then that he brought into being the Théâtre Libre that was destined to revolutionize the French drama. In March, 1887, in a little hall off a dark passage, he directed an amateur production of four short plays, defraying all expenses out of his enormous salary. The performance, as a whole, was a failure; but one of the plays was enough of a success to be taken up by one of the commercial theaters.

Antoine had been dissatisfied with the amateur organizations with which he had been associated, because of their reliance upon plays which had been successful on the popular stage; so he had determined to launch this new venture, for the trying-out of plays which had not reached the commercial theater. Two months later he gave his scheme a second trial; and this was sufficiently successful to induce him to give up his post in order to devote himself entirely to the new movement. He appealed for plays so unconventional as to have no chance of production at any of the regular theaters and at once began producing the naturalistic type of play that came to be associated with the Théâtre Libre. The first of his plays of this type was Jean Jullien's *Sérénade,* which is therefore of great historical importance. Among the dramatists whom Antoine made or helped to make were Georges de Porto-Riche, Eugène Brieux and François de Curel; also, among his first productions was a play by that strange genius, Villiers de l'Isle-Adam.

The Théâtre Libre lasted nine years, by which time the commercial theaters had stolen both its authors and its actors. Its young authors, of whom Jullien was the first theorist, had rid the stage of the aside, the soliloquy, the harangue and the *raisonneur,* had substituted simplicity for complexity in the conduct of the story, had made a study of

life and character the main consideration, instead of plot, had set their faces against romance and sentimentality and had made the action brisker.

Of all the writers whom Antoine introduced to the public, the greatest was the Vicômte François de Curel. He has been called "the French Ibsen"; but such a label, like most labels, is apt to create a false impression. To suppose him to be on the level of Ibsen were to do him more than justice; to regard him as an imitator of the Norwegian would be to do him less than justice, for he is a dramatist of profound originality. He has had the advantage of possessing wealth, and has therefore been free from the necessity of writing for a living and from having to sacrifice his conception of art in order to satisfy the demands of an ignorant and stupid public. From the first he wrote what he chose and when he chose and took as long over it as he chose. His subject is mostly psychological and pathological abnormality. Naturally, he is a dramatist for the intellectual, not for the masses.

He began extraordinarily. The big theatrical managers of Paris having declined his work, it occurred to him to try Antoine. He sent him three separate plays as from three different individuals, giving assumed names and addresses. Antoine took all three and a number of others with him to the seaside; and the only three he accepted were the three written by Curel. He sent three letters of acceptance and was returned one letter of acknowledgement.

The first of the three to be produced was *L'Envers d'une Sainte,* which is one of Curel's finest. It is like an Ibsen play in that all the incident had occurred before the play opens. It is almost entirely a woman's drama, the only male character playing but a small role. It describes a struggle between two women for the memory of a woman both had loved. The subject is such as Strindberg would have been at home with; and even Strindberg could scarcely have dealt with it in more masterly fashion. Of his other plays, the most famous are *Les Fossiles, La Nouvelle Idole* and *La Danse devant le Miroir.* The latter is the most striking of all his plays; but it does not seem to have been translated into English. It is somewhat too outré and

metaphysical for popular taste. Whether *Les Fossiles* or *L'Envers d'une Sainte* is the best of the others is a matter of opinion; but generally the former is so regarded. It has more elements of popularity than any other of Curel's plays as containing less talk, less abstract psychology, more action and more dramatic situation. It is the work of one of the old nobility; and in this play one feels that he is writing from the heart.

In reality, his plays are melodramatic, though their subtle psychology seems to render such a word inappropriate. He is fond of bizarre situations; but he is always honest and thorough in his treatment. His style is distinguished, with an occasional tendency to over-preciousness.

Brieux is a successor of Augier and Dumas *fils* in the determined warfare which he has waged upon the conventions of organized society, though his substitution of realism for romance and of truth for sentimentality puts him far from the latter, while in his technique and the naturalness of his language he is more modern than either. He is the French thesis dramatist *par excellence*. His plays are, much more than those of Augier and Dumas, problem-plays. The first such play in the French language was *La Révolte* by Villiers de l'Isle-Adam, a brief drama in which Ibsen's *A Doll's House* was anticipated. Villiers, however, wrote nothing else in this vein; and Brieux may be regarded as the first, as well as the most noteworthy, of French problem-dramatists. He has been a productive writer. After the production of two plays in collaboration he was obliged to wait ten years to get anything staged. He had, indeed, even had difficulty in getting anything read; but then Antoine gave him his opportunity; and he won out. It was, however, two years later, in 1892, that he became famous, on the production of *Blanchette,* which shows the evils of education above one's station in life, the folly of unfitting a girl for and putting her out of sympathy for the home life to which she must return. This play has remained the most popular of its author's dramas.

In 1897 appeared what is generally regarded as one of his three best, *Les Trois Filles de M. Dupont.* It is not an

agreeable piece; but it is powerful and interesting. Its fault is that its author never seems to be quite certain what he intends it to be. It begins sentimentally, proceeds passionately and ends cynically. Mainly the reader is interested in one of the daughters, named Julie, whose anguish at her husband's refusal to allow her to become a mother makes the greatness of the play. Then she ceases to be pathetically human and becomes a feminine propagandist, and, after all, ends by a servile submission. The author might have better retained sympathy for her by making her fly in the face of conventions than by making her thus basely acquiescent. However, one might react to such conduct in real life, such reaction is inevitable in the life of the drama, where we have perhaps a keener sense of justice and less inclination to be dominated by the dictates of society. In 1900 came *La Robe Rouge,* of which later; and, in 1901, *Les Remplaçantes,* which attacks the practice of taking women from the country to act as wet nurses in Paris.

In 1902 appeared the most famous, and perhaps the worst, of Brieux' plays, *Les Avaries,* known in English under a title that is merely an expressive vulgarism, *Damaged Goods.* This is not a play at all, but a propagandist pamphlet—a prolonged lecture on the undesirability of syphilis. In it Brieux doubtless did good work, needful work; but it shows him contemptible as a dramatist. *Maternité,* the other play which won for the author the extravagant praise of Bernard Shaw (who declared him to be the greatest French dramatist since Molière), is almost equally bad. (Had Shaw bestowed his eulogy on the strength of *La Robe Rouge* and *Les Remplaçantes,* one might have smiled at his enthusiasm; but to give utterance to it on the strength of *Les Avaries* and *Maternité* suffices only to make him utterly ridiculous.) *La Robe Rouge* is generally regarded as Brieux' masterpiece. It is a most interesting play, though the act of melodramatic justice which ends the action is less effective than would have been the triumph of the wrong-doing victim. The play shows the evil of the French judicial system, under which an examining magistrate strives to secure convictions because

it is only by doing so that he can obtain promotion. Here at least the thesis is not permitted to subjugate the drama, as in so many of Brieux plays. So interesting is the story, so true are the characters, that we forget that the work is in its essence propaganda. Whether in construction or in characterization, in strength of satire or in theatrical effectiveness, Brieux is here at his best, though it is certainly a flaw that, after being given excellent reasons for regarding the accused man as guilty, we are not given the facts that prove his innocence. It is not a sound art that expects us to take the assurance of his innocence on trust.

The author's prime quality is the nobility of purpose that actuates all, or nearly all his work. His steady aim is the betterment of human conditions. He continually insists on the importance of the child as the nucleus of home life and on the need of safeguarding the child's future. To woman he always endeavors to do justice, and in the attempt is apt to do more than justice. Sex problems, as such, do not interest him; and that is matter for congratulation. His work may be considered an epitome of the life of France. He shows us many phases of it. What he sees he depicts, covering little, hiding nothing. He has the courage not only to face the facts, but to bring them before us in the starkest nudity. His language is at times almost Elizabethan in its frankness. His style leaves much to be desired: he has none of the artist's reticence, none of his polish, none of his sense of beauty. Had he been a great artist, he would have clothed even his unbeautiful themes in an ennobling loveliness. He has neither the requisite sense of beauty nor the poetic imagination.

It is to be said to his credit that he never descends to the tricks of the theatrical craftsman. He is sufficiently a master of his art not to need them. His typical play does not revolve around an incident or an individual or even a conflict, but around an idea. That effects the unity. His worst fault is his abominable habit of preaching, which is destructive of his dramas as drama. It is part of that lack of artistry that is Brieux' besetting sin. He sometimes has fine dramatic ideas, and, instead of making great plays of them, he makes bad sermons. His treatment of his subject

is not dramatic, but polemical. He has warm sympathy for humanity and considerable insight into individual character. He does not idealize, and tries to be fair to all his characters, showing the good in his evil ones, the evil in his good ones. His people are not of a few types, like those of Ibsen and Strindberg and Shaw; their actions and words are alike true to life; and yet they make no lasting impression and we cannot help regarding them as mere puppets brought before us for the enforcement of the lesson the writer wishes to teach us.

That the work of Brieux will live may be doubted. The sad fate of the reformer is that he holds us only till his reforms are effected; and Brieux is much more the reformer than the dramatist. For all his many merits, he is too deficient in constructive artistry, in style, in imagination, in personality to be likely to win a place among the great dramatists of all time.

Paul Hervieu, author of *La Course du Flambeau* and *Le Dédale,* is a writer of thesis plays, like Brieux, and a psychologist, like Curel. He is cruelly logical, like Becque, and argumentative, like Dumas *fils.* He is a better artist than Brieux, but too fond of talk; and he even reverts to the Dumas trick of having a *raisonneur,* to weigh the merits of the points made in the discussions. But, though his plays sometimes degenerate into debating-society performances, he is a master of tense situation and an uncommon tragic gift. His plots are capital, but tinged with melodrama. Despite his very notable merits, he leaves us cold, partly because he is so mainly intellectual, partly because the persons he studies are regarded rather as cases than as human beings, partly because he is rather the expounding scientist than the critical inquirer, partly because we cannot help feeling that there is more thought than inspiration.

Of the love-psychologists, there are three noteworthy men, Maurice Donnay (the author of *Amants*), Georges de Porto-Riche (the author of *Amoureuse*) and Henry Bataille (the author of *La Femme Nue*), though the last-named is to be regarded rather as the pathologist than as the psychologist of love. Donnay's great gift is the power of depicting emotion; but, for all his greater reputation, it may be

questioned whether he has Porto-Riche's ability to analyze the soul of woman. The latter's lightness of touch and distinction are admirably displayed in his playlet, *La Chance de Françoise.* Henry Lavedan is airy and superbly skilful; Henry Bernstein was a later Sardou, of tremendous force and little sincerity; Octave Mirbeau's one chance of being remembered in his authorship of *Les Affaires Sont les Affaires,* just as Pailleron is remembered only for the admirable *Le Monde ou l'on s'ennuie,* produced in 1881; Emile Fabre is a thesis dramatist of contemporary note, not likely to survive, despite his undeniable power; Jules Lemaître gave the world in *Le Pardon* a masterpiece, remarkable, among other things, for possessing but three characters; Tristan Bernard is a writer of farce-comedies, many of which are real inspirations; Georges Courteline is the great successor of Molière and Beaumarchais and Labiche, not altogether unworthy of comparison with them; and, finally, Bourdet has quite recently made a reputation for himself with his play, *La Prisonnière.*

Of verse dramatists the most noteworthy have been Jean Richepin, Edmond Rostand, the Greek Jean Papadiamantopoulos (who took the name of Jean Moréas, and gave to the world in 1904 the finest classic drama France has seen for generations) and Paul Claudel. The last-named, who has written both in prose and in verse (his most famous work, *L'Otage,* being in prose and his only other one of any note, *L'Annonce Faite à Marie,* being in verse, is a mediæval reactionary whose plays are allegories both mystic and misty, and whose pietism does not help to make his work dramatic. Undoubtedly the most influential and significant of the four is Rostand. He is seen at his most charming in *Les Romanesques,* at his greatest in *Cyrano de Bergerac. L'Aiglon* is without life; *Chantecler,* a magnificent failure. It is only in *Cyrano* that Rostand has a real chance of going down to posterity. In almost all his plays he shows himself a metrist of extraordinary versatility; here, and here alone, he proves himself a dramatist to be reckoned with. The action is as lively and the development of the story as ingenious as in a drama of the school of Lope de Vega. In it we have the romantic drama of Victor Hugo almost at

its best. It is a drama of artifice, essentially an acting play; and yet so magnificent is the author's gift of expression, so strong the emotion that sweeps through the drama, that it can still be read with pleasure now that the first glamor has gone from it. But, despite the grandeur of Rostand's *Cyrano* and the greatness of the *Iphigénie* of Jean Moréas, there has been no revival of either the romantic or the classical drama in France. Both may come again; but their time is not yet.

SELECTIONS FROM FRENCH DRAMA

From The Crows

A Comedy in Four Acts by Henry Becque.

ACT I

[*The stage represents a parlor. Brilliant decoration, too luxurious. At the back of the stage, three double doors; double doors on both sides. On the stage, to the right, a piano. Left, against the wall, a writing desk, next a fireplace. Up stage left, a table; down stage, a sofa. Various pieces of furniture, looking glass, flowers, etc. As the curtain rises,* Vigneron *is discovered, stretched on the sofa, in his dressing gown and with a newspaper in his hand. He is dozing.* Marie, *seated beside him, is doing needle-work,* Judith *is at the piano,* Blanche *at the table, upon which she is writing.*]

Mme. Vigneron (*entering*). Close your piano, Judith, dear, your father is asleep. (*Going to the table.*) Blanche?

Blanche. Mama?

Mme. Vigneron. Are you through?

Blanche. In a minute.

Mme. Vigneron. Did you count how many we shall be at the table?

Blanche. Sixteen.

[Mme. Vigneron *takes a chair and goes to sit by the side of* Blanche.

Blanche. Do you believe that the dinner will be better for putting the menu on the plate?

Mme. Vigneron. It will at least not be worse.

Blanche. What a peculiar custom! Are you sure it is the correct thing?

MME. VIGNERON. Sure and certain. I read it in the "Bourgeois Cook Book."

BLANCHE. Shall we decide on the places together?

MME. VIGNERON. Let's see! First, Mme. de Saint-Genis?

BLANCHE. That's done.

MME. VIGNERON. Her son?

BLANCHE. You may be sure that I did not forget him

MME. VIGNERON. Father Mouton?

BLANCHE. The dear Father. I shall have received all the sacraments from his hand—baptism, communion—and marriage!

MME. VIGNERON. If you chatter like that at each name, we shall not be through in a week, M. Teissier!

BLANCHE. Here is M. Teissier. I could have deprived myself of his presence.

VIGNERON (*awakening*). What's that I hear? Is it Mademoiselle Blanche who speaks with such authority in my house?

BLANCHE. Yes, papa, it is your little Blanche.

VIGNERON. And may I know what M. Teissier did to you, Mademoiselle?

BLANCHE. To me? Nothing! He is old, ugly, coarse, miserly and always looks at one stealthily—that alone would be sufficient to make me suffer when I come into contact with him.

VIGNERON. Very good! All right! I'll fix that! Madame Vigneron, you will have that little girl's plate removed, she will dine in her room.

BLANCHE. Why don't you add that we shall sign the contract of marriage without me?

VIGNERON. If you say another word, I won't let you marry. There! (*A pause.*)

MARIE (*after rising*). Listen to me, my dear father, and answer me seriously, which you never do when we speak to you of your health. How do you feel?

VIGNERON. Pretty well.

MARIE. And yet your face is flushed.

VIGNERON. Is it? That will pass in the open air.

MARIE. If you were to feel dizzy again, we should have to send for a doctor.

VIGNERON. A doctor! Do you want me to die?

MARIE. Since you are joking about it and you know that it grieves me, don't let's speak of it any more. (*She leaves him, he catches her by the bottom of her dress and brings her back into his arms.*)

VIGNERON. So you love your old father Vigneron very, very much?

MARIE. Yes, I love you very, very, very much. But you do nothing that I wish you to do and that you ought to do. In the first place, you should work less, enjoy your fortune a little more and take care of yourself when you are sick.

VIGNERON. I am not sick, my child! I know what's the matter! I am somewhat tired, and the blood is rushing to my head. This happens to me every year, at this time, when I am taking inventory. The inventory of the firm Teissier, Vigneron and Company! Do you know what we were offered, Teissier and I, for our factory, not longer than a week ago? Six hundred thousand francs!

MARIE. You should have taken it.

VIGNERON. I'll sell for a million, ten years from now, and in the meantime, it will make as much more.

MARIE. How old will you be then?

VIGNERON. How old shall I be? In ten years? I shall be as old as my grandchildren, and we shall have good romps together. (*Enter* AUGUST.) What do you want, August?

AUGUST. It is your architect who would like to speak to you.

VIGNERON. Tell M. Lefort that if he needs to speak to me, he may call on me at the factory.

AUGUST. He just came from the factory.

VIGNERON. Let him go back to it. I am here at home, with my wife and my children and will not be disturbed to receive my contractors. (*Exit* AUGUST.) Let me get up. (MARIE *leaves him; he rises with an effort, is overcome by a slight dizziness and takes a few tottering steps.*)

MARIE (*going back to him*). Why will you not see a doctor?

VIGNERON. Aren't we through with that yet?

MARIE. In spite of what you say, you are not well, and I am worried. Take care of yourself, do something. If you were to diet for a week, it might make you perfectly well again.

VIGNERON. I understand you and your diet! I eat too much, isn't that it? Come, speak up, I will not be angry. I eat too much? Can't help it, girlie. I have not always had a full table and good things in plenty. Ask your mother, she will tell you that at the beginning of our married life I went to bed more than once without supper. I am making up for it. It's silly, it's ugly, it hurts me, but I can't resist. (*Leaving* MARIE.) And also I believe that I made a mistake in reading the "Siècle" after lunch; it disturbs my digestion. (*He rumples the paper and while going upstage, throws it on the sofa; his glances go to* JUDITH, *who, seated*

at the piano, with her back to her father, seems to be lost in her reflections; he goes to her on tiptoes and shouts in her ear.) Judith!

JUDITH. Oh, father! I don't like that kind of joke, and you know it.

VIGNERON. Do not get angry, Mademoiselle, we shall not do it any more. Judith, tell me, what's happening in the moon.

JUDITH. Make fun of me now.

VIGNERON. Where do you get the idea I am making fun of you? I have a daughter called Judith. Is she here? Is she elsewhere? How should I know? She is never heard.

JUDITH. I have nothing to say.

VIGNERON. You should speak anyhow.

JUDITH. What pleasure do you find in always teasing me about that? I see you, I listen to you, I love you and I am happy.

VIGNERON. Are you happy?

JUDITH. Absolutely.

VIGNERON. Then, daughter, you are right and I am wrong. Will you kiss me?

JUDITH (*rising*). Will I kiss you? A hundred times instead of once, my dear father. (*They kiss. Enter* AUGUST.)

VIGNERON. What's the matter again? Can't I kiss my children in peace?

AUGUST. M. Dupuis is here, Monsieur.

VIGNERON. Dupuis! Dupuis, the furniture dealer on the Voges square? What does he want? I settled his bill long ago.

AUGUST. M. Dupuis came to see, as he was passing, if Monsieur had any orders for him.

VIGNERON. Tell M. Dupuis for me that I shall not buy twice from a rascal of his kind. Go. (*Exit* AUGUST; *he goes towards the table.*) Now, what you doing there, both of you?

MME. VIGNERON. Let us alone, my dear. We are busy with this evening's dinner.

VIGNERON. Ah! Mme. Vigneron, come here and let me whisper into your ear. (MME. VIGNERON *rises and they meet down stage.*) So it is agreed, decided, we give our daughter to that coxcomb.

MME. VIGNERON. Is it to tell me this that your disturb me?

VIGNERON. Do listen to me. Goodness knows that I have nothing against this marriage. Mme. de Saint-Genis seems to me a good woman. She hasn't a cent; that isn't her fault. Her son is a nice little fellow, very gentle, very polite, and has wonderfully curled hair. By-and-by I shall not hesitate to tell him that he puts too much grease on it. He earns a thousand francs in the Department of the Interior; that's pretty good for his age. And yet, at

the last moment, I am wondering whether this marriage is *reasonable,* and if my daughter will be quite happy with that little fellow just because he has a "de" in front of his name.

MME. VIGNERON. Blanche is crazy over her George.

VIGNERON. Blanche is a child; the first young man she met turned her head, that's very simple.

MME. VIGNERON. What has come over you, my dear? Why do you question this marriage, which is as good as completed? I do not suppose that you are reproaching Mme. de Saint-Genis because of her financial position; our own has not always been what it is now; then what are you complaining of? That M. George is a handsome, well-brought-up young man of good family? If he has a "de" in front of his name, so much the better for him.

VIGNERON. It flatters you that your son-in-law will belong to the nobility.

MME. VIGNERON. Yes, it flatters me; I admit it, but I would not sacrifice the happiness of one of my daughters to such a trifle. (*She draws closer, and in a lower tone.*) Do you want me to tell you everything, Vigneron? Blanche is a child, it is true. The dear girl is as modest and innocent as one can be, but she has too much feeling for her age; we shall not repent having married her early. Finally, Father Mouton, who is a true friend, who has known us for twenty years, would not have busied himself with this marriage if it had not been to the advantage of all concerned.

VIGNERON. Who says anything to the contrary? But just the same we acted too quickly. In the first place, a priest who brings about marriages is not playing his part. And then, will you explain to me how Mme. de Saint-Genis, who, I repeat, hasn't a cent, manages to have such fine relations? I thought that her son's witnesses would be unimportant people; and, by Jove! she found two crack ones who beat our own—a Department Chief and a General! The Department Chief I can understand—M. George is in his Department; but the General!

MME. VIGNERON. Well, what about the General? You know very well that M. de Saint-Genis, the father, was a Captain. Go to your business. (*She leaves him.*) Blanche, give your father his coat. (*She goes to the door to the right, which she leaves open.*)

VIGNERON (*he removes his house-gown and slips on the coat which* BLANCHE *brings him*). Here you are, you ungrateful girl!

BLANCHE. Ungrateful! Why do you call me that?

VIGNERON. You ask me why? If we are rich to-day, if you are about to marry, if I give you a dowry, do we not owe it all to M. Teissier?

BLANCHE. No, papa.

VIGNERON. What do you mean with your "No, papa"? Isn't it Teissier and his factory which made me what I am?

BLANCHE. That is to say that you made M. Teissier's factory what it is. Without you, it was costing him money; with you, goodness knows how much it has earned for him. You see, papa, if M. Teissier were another kind of man—a just man—this is what he would say to you, after all the trouble you have taken: "This factory first belonged to me, then it belonged to both of us, now it is yours."

VIGNERON. Kind little heart, you put feeling into everything. One must have feelings, but not depend too much upon the feelings of others. (*He kisses her.*)

MME. VIGNERON (*entering*). How is that, Vigneron, still here?

VIGNERON. Mme. Vigneron, answer me this question: Am I under obligation to Teissier, or is Teissier under obligation to me?

MME. VIGNERON. Neither one thing nor the other.

VIGNERON. Explain that to us.

MME. VIGNERON. Do you care very much, my dear, about my everlastingly repeating that old story?

VIGNERON. Yes, repeat it again.

MME. VIGNERON. M. Teissier, children, was a small banker at No. 12 Guenegaud Street. We lived in the same house. We knew him and we did not know him. We had had recourse to him in times of embarrassment, and he had accepted a few notes without raising too many objections, because we had the reputation of being honest people. Later, in the course of business, M. Teissier found himself with a factory on his hands. He remembered your father, and offered to take him as manager, on a salary. At that time, our home was out of trouble, your father had a good situation in a good house, and the wisest thing was to keep it. Fifteen months passed by; we had thought no more about that for a long time, when one evening, at half past nine sharp—I remember the hour—the door of your room was opened and Vigneron and I were looking at each other while you slept—the bell rang. It was M. Teissier, who, for the first time, came up our five flights of stairs. He had come to a great decision: his factory, to speak plainly, was not doing anything; he came to implore your father to save him by becoming his partner. Vigneron thanked him very politely and put him off to the next day. As soon as M. Teissier was gone, your father said to me—listen to what your father said: "Here is a chance, my dear; it's coming quite late, when we were beginning to live in peace. I am going to have hard work, you will be anxious all the

time until I succeed, if I do succeed! But we have four children, and their fate may depend on that." (*She wipes a tear and shakes hands with her husband; the children have drawn near; all are moved.*) To come back to what you were asking me, it seems very simple to me: M. Teissier and M. Vigneron did business together; it turned out well for both of them, so they are quits.

VIGNERON. Ah, children, how well your mother speaks! Follow her example and live up to her standard; you will never be asked for more. (*He kisses his wife.*)

MME. VIGNERON. You are taking a great deal of time, my dear; that isn't natural. Are you still unwell?

VIGNERON. No, my dear; on the contrary, I feel better. It seems to me that I am quite well. Now, I am going to request Mlle. Judith, the gr-r-reat musician of the house, to let me hear some music, and then I shall rid you of my presence.

The interview between Madame Vigneron, and Mme. de Saint Genis reveals the business instincts of the French bourgeoisie.

[AUGUST *enters through the rear and announces: "Mme. de Saint-Genis."*

MME. DE SAINT-GENIS. Good-morning, Mme. Vigneron. Oh, all right, kiss me. This is more than the fashion here—it is the rage; you kiss every five minutes. I am come early, but do not let my arrival disturb anything. If I am in the way at all, tell me so frankly. I'll go or I'll stay, as you please.

MME. VIGNERON. Stay, Madam; stay, I beg of you.

MME. DE SAINT-GENIS. Perhaps you have some calls to make?

MME. VIGNERON. Not at all.

MME. DE SAINT-GENIS. Then you are expecting some?

MME. VIGNERON. No, indeed.

MME. DE SAINT-GENIS. Shall I take off my hat?

MME. VIGNERON. Or I am going to take it off for you.

MME. DE SAINT-GENIS. Women like us, Mme. Vigneron, who can be seen whenever one wishes, and whom one may surprise at any hour, are becoming rare nowadays. I would not risk such an indiscretion with most of my intimate friends.

MME. VIGNERON. Sit down, Madam, and tell me first how you are.

MME. DE SAINT-GENIS. Well, quite well. I do not remember ever having felt better. I noticed this morning, before my looking-glass, that I have gained flesh and color.

MME. VIGNERON. I have been waiting for a long time to ask you a question which, between you and me, is of no importance. How old are you, Madam?

MME. DE SAINT-GENIS. I am not concealing my age, my dear Madam. I could not, if I wanted to, because of my son. He will be twenty-three within a few days. I was seventeen when he was born. You may figure for yourself.

MME. VIGNERON. You are not put out by my curiosity?

MME. DE SAINT-GENIS. It is so natural among older ladies.

MME. VIGNERON. Do you know, Madam, that we are two very imprudent mothers—you by marrying so young a boy, twenty-three years, and I, by giving him my daughter?

MME. DE SAINT-GENIS. Reassure yourself, my dear Mme. Vigneron. George has submitted to me in everything until now; I intend to keep on guiding him after his marriage. I brought up my son very severely; I believe I have told you so; that is why he is such a young man as one rarely finds. He never had any debts, and, which is not less wonderful, never dissipated with women, though I know some who would have been perfectly willing. My son received a complete education; he speaks three languages, he is musical, he has a fine name, good manners, religious principles, and if, with all that, he does not make his way, it will be because the world has changed. (*Changing her tone.*) Tell me, since we are mentioning George, and since I do everything for him: I had asked a notary to correct an omission in the contract; does your husband know about it?

MME. VIGNERON. I can not tell you.

MME. DE SAINT-GENIS. You remember that M. Vigneron, after having stated that Mlle. Blanche's dowry would be two hundred thousand francs, asked to pay the amount in installments?

MME. VIGNERON. On the contrary, Madam, my husband declared before everything else that he required time to pay his daughter's dowry. Then you spoke to him of securities, of a mortgage on the houses he was having built, and he refused. Finally, we agreed on the amount and on the time of payments.

MME. DE SAINT-GENIS. So be it! Nevertheless, it seems just and natural to me that, until the full amount has been paid to the young couple, it should bring them the interest at five or six per cent; if you are willing, make it six. Besides, in drawing the contract, Mr. Vigneron has yielded so gracefully to all my little whims that he surely will raise no objection to one more. Let us speak of something else. Let us speak of your dinner. Have you many guests, and who are they?

The sudden death of Vigneron brings the light-hearted jollity of his home to a sudden end, and puts the family into the clutches of "the crows." Mme. de Saint Genis, who is as clear-sighted as she is grasping, warns Mme. Vigneron:

Mme. de Saint-Genis. I wish with all my heart, Madam Vigneron, for yourself, to whom I wish no harm, and for your daughters, who are really charming, that M. Vigneron's estate might be easily settled; but, in business, nothing goes easily. What is simple is complicated, what is complicated is incomprehensible. Believe me, forget a little him who is no more and think of yourself and of your children. I am unfortunately not aware that M. Vigneron left you any bonds or stock in the Bank of France. He did not, did he? His fortune consisted in this factory of which he was half owner, and M. Teissier owns the other half. He owned some lots, that is true, but he had paid a good part of the amount with loans and mortgages. I recall all this out of my friendship for you, because women must warn and defend one another. It seems to me that I have no longer any interest here. We had formed a very admirable plan, that of marrying our children. Is it only delayed? I would hope so, but I am afraid it will hardly be. It will no longer be possible for you to keep the financial engagements which you had assumed, and nothing in the world would make me allow my son to contract a marriage for which he would have the right to reproach me later.

Mme. Vigneron. As you please, Madam. (*A pause with slight embarrassment.*)

Mme. de Saint-Genis (*briskly*). Good-bye, my dear Madam. Do what I tell you, attend to your interests; we shall speak again of our children some other time. But for goodness' sake, Madam Vigneron, get into your head the most useful and the most friendly recommendation that I may make to you. Distrust everybody, everybody! (*She goes towards the door upstage, accompanied very coldly by Madam Vigneron; the door opens. Enter* Teissier.) Stay, I beg of you, do not accompany me any further. (*Exit.*)

Mme. Vigneron (*weeping*). What a misfortune, M. Teissier; what frightful misfortune! my poor Vigneron. It's work that killed him! Why did he work so hard? He did not care for money; he spent nothing for himself. Ah! he wanted to see his children happy during his lifetime, and to leave them a fortune after his death. (*Silence.*)

Teissier. Was it with your authorization, Madam, that Madam de Saint-Genis called at my house to find out in what situation the death of your husband left you?

MME. VIGNERON. I was absolutely ignorant of this call, which I would not have allowed.

TEISSIER. My duty was very clear; I took the lady by the arm and pushed her out of my office.

MME. VIGNERON. Her indiscretion did not deserve anything better. M. Teissier, Madam de Saint-Genis was here when you came; she was talking to me of my husband's business. You knew my husband's business better than anyone else, tell me about it.

TEISSIER. It just happened that in a moment of leisure, I amused myself in drawing a balance of Vigneron's estate. First, what do you want to know? Whether it will end in profit or loss? (*Motioned by* MADAM VIGNERON.) From my calculation, I find the following general situation. You are listening to me? After the factory is sold——

MME. VIGNERON. Why sell it?

TEISSIER. We shall have to come to that. After you have sold also your lots and a few buildings which had been begun——

MME. VIGNERON. I shall keep my lots.

TEISSIER. You will not be able to. After your running debts are settled.

MME. VIGNERON. I have no debts.

TEISSIER. I estimate them at about forty thousand francs. However, I do not reckon your architect in this amount. The settlement with him will have to come with the sale of your property. I proceed. After you have paid the inheritance tax.

MME. VIGNERON. Does one have to pay to inherit from her husband?

TEISSIER. One has to pay, yes, Madam. After you have settled the general expenses, I mean by general expenses the fees of the notary, those of the attorney, the unforeseen expenses, carriages, postage, etc., the account you will have opened under the caption: Liquidation of the late Vigneron. This account being closed, I say you will have about fifty thousand francs left.

MME. VIGNERON. Fifty thousand francs a year.

TEISSIER. A year? Don't you listen to what I am telling you? Where do you find, in all that Vigneron left, the necessary capital to produce an income of fifty thousand francs?

[MADAME VIGNERON *leaves him abruptly; after ringing the bell, she opens her writing desk in haste.*

MME. VIGNERON (*writing*). "My dear M. Bourdon, be kind enough to come and speak to me as soon as possible, I shall not rest until I see you. My regards: Widow Vigneron." Fifty thousand francs! (*To* AUGUST, *who enters.*) Carry this letter immediately.

TEISSIER (*he has pulled out a portfolio full of papers*). You will understand better when you read——

MME. VIGNERON. Fifty thousand francs! (*Turning towards* TEISSIER *and striking the portfolio out of his hand.*) Keep your papers, I will have nothing more to do with you. (*Exit hurriedly through door on the left.*)

TEISSIER (*while picking up the papers*). Ignorance, incapacity, outbursts of anger! such are women! What's that one thinking of, I wonder! She wants to keep her lots, she will not be able to. Bourdon will make her understand that. If it is possible for Bourdon to manage that affair as he promised me, quickly and quietly, I'll get hold of properties worth double what I shall pay for them. But we must not lose any time. Delay would bring buyers and play into the hand of the landlord. When Bourdon knows that I have struck the first blow, he will hasten to strike the others. (*He makes ready to go, enter* MARIE—*door left.*)

MARIE. Do not go before making peace with my mother.

TEISSIER (*coming back down stage*). You stopped me just in time, Mademoiselle. I was just going to the Tribunal of Commerce to have your mother subpœnaed so that I may be refunded the money I advanced to her. I discommoded myself in order not to leave your mother in an embarrassed situation. (*He once more pulls out his pocket-book and takes a paper from it.*) You will be kind enough to hand her this little bill which she can easily verify: "January 7th, advanced to Madam Vigneron four thousand francs," which were to be for the funeral of your father; "January 15, advanced to Madam Vigneron five thousand francs for household expenses"; that is what I was told it was for; also on the 15th, listen to this, "paid a note, signed: Gaston Vigneron, to the order of Lefebure, amount: ten thousand francs." As your brother was under age, his note was not worth anything. But Madam Vigneron would not have wished to defraud a man whom this young man deceived, of course, concerning his age and his personal resources. (*He folds the paper and hands it to her.*) I am your servant.

MARIE. Stay, Monsieur, I beg you to stay. It is not this account which upset my mother to such a point that she lost her temper with you. Rather, she would have thanked you for having honored her son's signature while blaming him as he deserves.

TEISSIER (*surprised and smiling*). Do you know then what a signature is?

MARIE. My father taught me.

TEISSIER. It would have been better had he taught it to your brother.

MARIE. Sit down, Monsieur; I am perhaps too young to talk business with you.

TEISSIER (*still standing and smiling*). Go on, talk, I am listening to you.

MARIE. For my part, I was expecting a great change in our situation, but I did not think that it would be entirely destroyed. At any rate, you would not advise us to do anything weak or rash. What ought we to do, then? Examine our situation, we ask for advice and will not take a resolution before knowing the pro and con of our situation.

TEISSIER. Ah! Let us leave aside your buildings which do not concern me. What are you going to do with the factory?

MARIE. What would happen if we wished to keep it and you wished to sell it?

TEISSIER. It would be sold. That point is covered by law.

MARIE. There is a law?

TEISSIER (*still smiling*). Yes, Mademoiselle, there is a law. There is Article 815 of the Civil Code, which authorizes either of us to liquidate the partnership, which was broken in fact by the death of your father. I wish to give you the opportunity of making sure of this at once. (*Pulling a book from his pocket.*) You see what this is: "Compendium of the laws and regulations in force in all French territories." I never go out without taking my code along. I advise you to form that habit too. (*He hands her the volume open at the page; while she is reading the article, he looks at her with a mixture of interest, pleasure and mockery.*) Do you understand?

MARIE. Perfectly.

BOURDON (*enters*). Good morning, Mesdemoiselles. Mme. Vigneron is in, of course? Be kind enough to tell her that I am waiting for her.

MARIE. Go, my dear. (*Exit* BLANCHE, *left door.*)

BOURDON. Your mother has just written me that she was very anxious to see me, and I can readily conceive that; I waited for her every day at my office.

MARIE. My mother, M. Bourdon, was so grieved and so ailing——

BOURDON. I understand very well, Mademoiselle, that, stricken as she has been, your mother is not amusing herself in making calls or going shopping; but one braces up and goes to see his notary and if unable to do so, asks him to call. Very fortunately, M. Vigneron's estate does not present very serious difficulties; and yet, your father left a large land deal which has to be examined closely

and to be liquidated as soon as possible; you hear, liquidated as soon as possible.

[*Enter* MADAM VIGNERON.

MME. VIGNERON (*weeping, her handkerchief in her hand*). What a misfortune, M. Bourdon, what a frightful misfortune! My poor Vigneron! It is not enough to mourn him night and day! I feel that I shall not long survive him. (*A pause.*)

BOURBON. Tell me, Madam, while I think of it, was it with your authorization that Madam de Saint-Genis called at my office to ascertain in what situation the death of your husband left you?

MME. VIGNERON. It was without my authorization, and if Madam de Saint-Genis were to pay you another call——

BOURDON. Reassure yourself. I received Madam de Saint-Genis in such a way that she will have no desire to come again. You wished to see me, Madam. Let us speak quickly, and to the point.

MME. VIGNERON. I shall not detain you long, M. Bourdon; I have but one question to ask you. Is it true, is it possible that my husband leaves only fifty thousand francs in all?

BOURDON. Who told you that?

MME. VIGNERON. M. Teissier.

BOURDON. Fifty thousand francs! Teissier may have gone too far. You know him. He is not a bad man, but he is brutal on money questions. I hope, and I will do all I can, you be sure of that, Madam, to obtain something more than that for you. (MADAM VIGNERON *bursts into tears and lets herself fall on the sofa; he goes to her.*) Were you hoping, Madam, that M. Vigneron's estate would be large? How much did you think it would be?

MME. VIGNERON. I do not know.

BOURDON. Surely, you must have ascertained what M. Vigneron left you? This is the first thing one does on losing a husband. (*He leaves her.*) Nevertheless, Teissier is very much to blame, and I shall not fail to tell him so, for mentioning a figure in a haphazard way. That is not the way to do business. To probate a will, we must begin at the beginning, attend to the most urgent business first, go step by step, and when we have settled everything, whatever is left will be left. (*Coming back to* MME. VIGNERON.) Have you decided anything, Madam, concerning your lots? You are facing there an evident necessity—you must sell them.

MARIE. What do you think we will get for them?

BOURDON (*going to* MARIE). What you will get for them, Mademoiselle? Nothing! You must not count on clearing anything.

MME. VIGNERON (*rising*). What advantage is there in selling then, if that is the case?

BOURDON (*coming back to* MME. VIGNERON). What advantage, Madam? The advantage of getting rid of a ball and chain which is tied to your ankle. Believe me, it is not my custom to be as positive as I am now when I offer advice. Each day of delay is portentous in its consequences for you. While you are deliberating, Catiline stands at the gates of Rome. To be specific, Catiline is the mortgage, which is eating you up, your architect who is lying in wait for you with his bill, the government which will claim its dues.

[*Enter* TEISSIER, *L. E.:* BLANCHE *behind him.*

TEISSIER. 'Morning, Bourdon.

BOURDON. Good morning, Teissier. I was just explaining to Madam Vigneron and her daughter how impossible it is for them to keep their lots.

TEISSIER. I have nothing to do with that. The ladies cannot have a better adviser than you. They are in good hands.

BOURDON. I beg of you, Madam, notice the point of view I take, so that there may be no misunderstanding between us. I do not wish to expose myself later to reproaches which I do not deserve. I merely wish to establish this point: The *statu quo* is harmful to your interests, get out of the *statu quo.* I am not telling you, far from it, that the condition of your properies is excellent and the moment is well chosen to offer them at auction. No. And yet, if I present the proposition in its most favorable aspect, and I shall not fail to do so, we might perhaps obtain a satisfactory result with a little charlatanism and beating of the bass drum, and——

TEISSIER (*aside*). What's that? what's that? (*In a low tone to* BOURDON.) Aren't we agreed any more?

BOURDON (*in a low tone*). Let me manage this. (*Going to* MME. VIGNERON.) Come, Madam, make up your mind, and make it up quickly, I advise you to. Let me know when you have decided. (*Makes ready to go.*)

TEISSIER. Don't go, Bourdon, before we have spoken of the factory.

BOURDON. The factory can wait, my dear M. Teissier. Before anything else, I would like to relieve Mme. Vigneron of her lots, We are in the presence of a widow and her four children who have been impoverished within a day; this is a very distressing situation, do not let us forget that. (TEISSIER *smiles.*)

[*Enter* AUGUST.

AUGUST (*goes to* MME. VIGNERON.) M. Lefort is here, Madam.

MME. VIGNERON. Be kind enough to remain a few minutes more, M. Bourdon. You are going to hear our architect, this might change your mind perhaps.

BOURDON. At your orders, Madam.

MME. VIGNERON (*to* AUGUST). Show M. Lefort in and ask Mlle. Judith to come here.

[*Enter* LEFORT.

MME. VIGNERON (*weeping, handkerchief in hand*). What a misfortune, M. Lefort, what a frightful misfortune! My poor Vigneron! I shall never get over my loss!

LEFORT (*common in manners and loud voiced*). Come, Madam, do not grieve like that. With coolness and perseverance we'll manage to replace your husband. (*Comes down stage.*)

TEISSIER. Good morning, Lefort.

LEFORT. I wish you good morning, M. Teissier.

[*Enter* JUDITH.

MARIE (*to* LEFORT). You were very much interested in the works which had been entrusted to you, Monsieur?

LEFORT. Yes, Mademoiselle. Vigneron was not a client for me, he was a brother.

MARIE. We are on the point of taking a very serious resolution.

LEFORT. Count on me, my time is yours, my purse is at your disposal. Vigneron's children are my children.

MARIE. If you have any explanations, any plan even, which you wish to communicate to us, be kind enough to tell us before these gentlemen.

LEFORT. I am ready, Mademoiselle. These gentlemen do not frighten me. I am used to speaking openly.

MME. VIGNERON. Sit down there, M. Lefort.

LEFORT (*seated*). Did you look at my memorandum, Madam? No, of course! So much the worse. It contained a note on M. Vigneron's lots in which the whole proposition is explained from A to Z. If I had this note before me, I would be more brief and would make myself clearer.

MARIE. I can give it to you, sir, I put your memorandum away myself.

LEFORT. You will oblige me.

[MARIE *goes to the writing desk, passing before her mother and* M. TEISSIER, *who are seated close together.*

TEISSIER (*to* MME. VIGNERON). Is your young lady orderly?

MME. VIGNERON. Very orderly.

TEISSIER. She'll make a capable woman, later?

MME. VIGNERON. Yes, I believe she will.

TEISSIER. Does she figure readily? (*No answer.*)

BOURDON (*takes the memorandum from* MARIE'S *hand and takes off a part of it, which he gives to* M. LEFORT). This is what you want, I suppose. If you allow me, I shall glance over your memorandum while listening to you. (*They exchange hostile glances.*)

LEFORT (*hammering each one of his sentences*). From the beginning, M. Vigneron's lots, situated as they were at the extremity of Paris, close to a railroad station, and encumbered because of this by numberless restrictions, were, at the price at which he bought them, a very bad speculation. Let us speak plainly—he was taken in.

BOURDON. I'll stop you there. No one was interested in deceiving M. Vigneron. He bought these lots in the hope that they would be condemned.

LEFORT. Condemned? By whom?

BOURDON. By the railroad.

LEFORT. What a joke! It was the railroad that was selling them!

BOURDON. Are you sure of that?

LEFORT. Perfectly sure.

BOURDON. Very well; then it was supposed that the city, which had begun vast improvements in the outlying districts, would need the property. I remember now—we hoped to deal with the city.

LEFORT. With the city or with the Sultan of Turkey. You can't tell me anything about real estate. I know Paris from A to Z. I proceed. M. Vigneron, who had been taken in, I repeat, soon became aware of his foolishness and wished to repair it. How? By building. He came to me. He had known my conscientiousness and my disinterestedness for a long time; I did not leave him until he entrusted his work to me. Unfortunately, my plans were no sooner made and the foundations begun when—(*comical pantomime*)—Vigneron skipped for the other world.

BOURDON. We all know those details, Monsieur; you are wasting our time telling us about them.

LEFORT. The heirs find themselves in a tight place, but they can come out of it to their advantage. They have at their disposal a devoted, intelligent man, who enjoys universal consideration in Paris—the architect of the deceased, who becomes their own. Will they listen to him? If they disregard his advice and his direction—(*comic pantomime*)—the game is lost.

BOURDON. State your proposal without so much verbosity, I pray.

LEFORT. Let us consider the most unfavorable hypothesis. M. Lefort, who is now addressing you, is dismissed. His bill is settled, loyally, without quibbling over each item. M. Lefort does not ask anything more for himself. What becomes of the property? I repeat, it lies far from the center, is hampered by restrictions, and, I may add, loaded down with mortgages, as many reasons which will be brought to bear against the owner for the benefit of a mysterious purchaser who will surely happen along. (*With great volubility.*) The property will be depreciated, the sale will be hastened, purchasers will be kept away, the court will be deceived so as to obtain a ridiculously upset price, the bids will be smothered—(*comic pantomime*)—there's a property reduced to nothing.

BOURDON. Be specific; I demand that you be specific. You say such and such things will be done. Who is to do it, if you please? Do you know that such manœuvres could be practiced by only one person, and that you are incriminating the notary in charge of the sale?

LEFORT. Maybe it's you.

BOURDON. I am not speaking for myself, but for all my colleagues who are accused by you. You speak very lightly of the most honorable corporation that I know. You cast suspicion upon the law itself in the person of the public officer whose duty it is to carry it out. You do worse than that, if it were possible: You disturb the security of families. How suitable it is for you to hurl such an accusation, when you present a bill of thirty-seven thousand francs!

LEFORT. I ask leave to be present when you present yours.

BOURDON. Let us end this. State briefly what you propose.

LEFORT. I am getting there. I propose to the heirs to keep on building——

BOURDON. Of course! Why did you not say that at first? You are the architect; you propose to keep on building.

LEFORT. Let me finish.

BOURDON. That is useless. If Mme. Vigneron is willing to listen to you, she is at liberty to do so; but as for me, I shall listen no longer to such rambling. What amount do you put up? Mme. Vigneron has no money, I warn you; where is yours? Three months from now we would be in the same position, with this difference—that your bill, which to-day is thirty-seven thousand francs, would be twice as large, at the rate you are going. Do not compel me to say more. I take your offer for what it seems to mean. I do not wish to see it in the light of some dark combination which would make you a landlord at a small cost.

LEFORT. What's that? Look me in the face, will you? Do I look like a man capable of a dark combination? Upon my word, I have never seen such a puppet as you!

BOURDON (*restraining himself, low*). What's that you call me, you mountebank?

[MME. VIGNERON *rises to interfere.*

TEISSIER. Leave them alone, Madam; do not say a word. One must never interrupt a business conversation.

LEFORT (*to* MME. VIGNERON). I'll withdraw, Madam. If you wish to know my plans and the resources at my disposal, you will send for me. If not, you will be kind enough to settle my bill as soon as possible. I have to make advances for all my clients—while a notary messes with the money of his. (*Exit.*)

TEISSIER. Wait for me, Lefort; we'll go part way together. (*To* MME. VIGNERON.) I'll leave you with Bourdon, Madam; make the most of having him here.

LEFORT (*coming back*). I forgot to tell you, Madam: Was it with your authorization that Mme. de Saint-Genis called at my office?

MME. VIGNERON. She called on every one. I authorized no one to go and see you, M. Lefort—no one—and if the lady were to call again——

LEFORT. The lady will not call again. I made her go down the stairs quicker than she came up.

TEISSIER (*to* MARIE). Good-bye, Mlle. Marie; keep in good health. (*He leaves her and comes back to her.*) Remain what you are. You'll have no lack of suitors. If I were not so old, I would be one myself. (*Exeunt* TEISSIER *and* LEFORT.)

BOURDON. Well, Madam?

MME. VIGNERON. What a mistake I made, M. Bourdon, in bringing about such a meeting!

BOURDON. I do not regret this discussion, Madam, if it enlightened you concerning your interests.

MME. VIGNERON. Forget what has taken place, so that you may see things in their true light. M. Lefort has no manners, I grant that, but he is not lacking in good sense nor in ability. After all, what he proposes to us is what my husband would have done if he had lived.

BOURDON. Are you speaking seriously, Madam? Did you not hear me give my appreciation of the true value of your architect's offers?

MME. VIGNERON. We might take another.

BOURDON. That one is not enough? (*A pause.*) Come nearer, young ladies. You are not *de trop*. Your mother is in the clouds; help me to bring her back to earth. I'll take the situation in its best aspect, Madam. Let us admit for an instant that your lots belong to you. I eliminate the mortgagees who have a lien upon them. Do you know how much it will cost to complete these houses which are hardly begun? Between four and five hundred thousand francs. You can well imagine that M. Lefort does not possess this amount. You are not depending on me to find it. Well, then? Even if I or some one else were to find it for you, would it be suitable for a woman—allow me to ask you that—to undertake an affair of this magnitude and to rush into an enterprise the end of which is not in sight? The question which I raise is so serious that, if it were brought up before the family council, whose duty will be to help you in your duties as executrix and guardian of your minor children, opposition might be made to the share of the children, however small it may be, being ventured in what is nothing but a speculation. (*Solemnly.*) As for me, Madam, if I were in a family council, entrusted with the interests of a minor—the most serious thing there is in the world—I would oppose it. (*A pause.*) You are warned now, Madam. By insisting any more, I would exceed the duties of my ministry. You know where my office is; I shall await your orders there. (*Exit.*)

MME. VIGNERON. Let us talk it over, children. Do not speak all at once, and let us try to agree. M. Lefort——

JUDITH (*interrupting*). Oh! M. Lefort!

MME. VIGNERON. You do not know yet what I wish to say. M. Lefort expresses himself very roughly, perhaps; but I believe that he has a good heart and is loyal.

JUDITH. And I believe exactly the contrary.

MME. VIGNERON. Why?

JUDITH. I think he has the appearance of a mountebank.

MME. VIGNERON. Ah! and you, Blanche—do you think that M. Lefort has the appearance of a mountebank?

BLANCHE. Yes, somewhat. I think Judith is right.

MME. VIGNERON. Very well. At any rate, his advice seems to me preferable to M. Bourdon's, who is so eager to sell our lots. What's your opinion, Marie?

MARIE. I haven't any yet.

MME. VIGNERON. Then we are not any better off than we were. Speak to us of M. Teissier.

MARIE. It seems to me that by acting gently and showing him some regard, we may obtain something from M. Teissier.

BLANCHE. What are you talking about, Marie? M. Teissier is the falsest and most dangerous man in the world.

MME. VIGNERON. Judith?

JUDITH. I do not know who is right, Blanche or Marie, but my opinion is that we can depend only on M. Bourdon.

MME. VIGNERON. I do not share your opinion, my child. M. Bourdon! M. Bourdon! In the first place, there was one question M. Bourdon should have asked me, and he does not seem to have thought of it. And, besides, I noticed much obscurity in his language. What's that phrase I remember: "Catiline stands at the gates of Rome"? (*To* MARIE.) Did you understand what he meant?

MARIE. Yes, I understood.

MME. VIGNERON. You understood? Really? Well, don't let's speak of it any more; you know more than I do. But M. Bourdon could have spoken of Catiline to me as much as he pleased, and also have asked me if I were in need of funds. Look at me, children—if we have to sell the lots, we shall sell them. What will be lost will be lost. But, listen to your mother; what she says once she will say forever: While I live, they shall not touch the factory!

MARIE. You are mistaken, mother.

MME. VIGNERON. While I live, they shall not touch the factory!

MARIE. M. Teissier may sell it to-morrow. There is a law which authorizes him to do so.

MME. VIGNERON. While I live——

MARIE. There is a law.

BLANCHE AND JUDITH. If there is a law——

MME. VIGNERON. Leave me alone with your law. If I were to have many days like this, children, I could not stand it; you would be without a mother before long! (*Lets herself fall upon the sofa and weeps.*)

AUGUST (*entering*). Letters for Madam.

MME. VIGNERON (*to* MARIE). Take the letters and read them to me.

MARIE. It's from the dressmaker: "Madam: We have the honor of sending you your bill, and take the liberty to call your attention to the fact that it exceeds the usual amount of our credits. Our collector will have the honor of calling upon you to-morrow. Accept, Madam, our respectful salutations. P. S.—We call your attention, Madam, to some new goods called 'accelerated mourning,' which are much worn by ladies, and may also be suitable for misses."

[MARIE *opens and reads a second letter.*

"Madam: M. Dubois, by the present letter, authorizes you to sublet your apartment, which will be easily done by you if you make a slight sacrifice. M. Dubois would have wished to do more, but he cannot. If he were to admit, as you claim, Madam, that a lease is cancelled by the death of the lessee, M. Dubois would establish in his house a dangerous precedent, which people would be tempted to abuse."

[*Third letter.*

"Madam: I sent to your house last week for payment of my little bill, and your servant answered rather brutally to the young girl who called that you would send payment. As no one came, I do not know to what I am to attribute the delay, which cannot go on. I am not running after customers; you know that, Madam; no more do I advertise in the newspapers. I leave that to the large Parisian firms where you pay in proportion. If I succeed in turning out hats which astonish by their low prices, freshness and distinction, it is because of my business activity and the regularity of my collections."

[Marie *gets ready to read a fourth letter.* Mme. Vigneron *stops her and begins to weep; the girls look at one another without speaking, and shake their heads in worried and sad attitudes.*

Cyrano De Bergerac

ACT I

A Representation at the Hotel de Bourgogne.

The hall of the Hotel de Bourgogne, in 1640. A sort of tennis-court arranged and decorated for a theatrical performance.

The hall is oblong and seen obliquely, so that one of its sides forms the back of the right foreground, and meeting the left background makes an angle with the stage, which is partly visible.

On both sides of the stage are benches. The curtain is composed of two tapestries which can be drawn aside. Above a harlequin's mantle are the royal arms. There are broad steps from the stage to the hall; on either side of these steps are the places for the violinists. Footlights.

Two rows, one over the other, of side galleries, the highest divided into boxes. No seats in the pit of the hall, which is the real stage of the theater; at the back of the pit, i. e., *on the right foreground, some benches forming steps, and underneath, a staircase which leads to the upper seats. An improvised buffet*

EDMOND ROSTAND

ornamented with little lusters, vases, glasses, plates of tarts, cakes, bottles, etc.

The entrance to the theater is in the center of the background, under the gallery of the boxes. A large door, half open to let in the spectators. On the panels of this door, in different corners, and over the buffet, red placards bearing the words, "La Clorise."

At the rising of the curtain the hall is in semi-darkness, and still empty. The lusters are lowered in the middle of the pit ready to be lighted.

The PUBLIC, *arriving by degrees.* TROOPERS, BURGHERS, LACKEYS, PAGES, *a* PICKPOCKET, *the* DOORKEEPER, *etc., followed by the* MARQUISES. CUIGY, BRISSAILLE, *the* BUFFET-GIRL, *the* VIOLINISTS, *etc.*

A confusion of loud voices is heard outside the door. A TROOPER *enters hastily.*

THE DOORKEEPER (*following him*). Hollo! You there! Your money!

THE TROOPER. I enter gratis.

THE DOORKEEPER. Why?

THE TROOPER. Why? I am of the King's Household Cavalry, 'faith!

THE DOORKEEPER (*to another* TROOPER *who enters*). And you?

SECOND TROOPER. I pay nothing.

THE DOORKEEPER. How so?

SECOND TROOPER. I am a musketeer.

FIRST TROOPER (*to the second*). The play will not begin till two. The pit is empty. Come, a bout with the foils to pass the time. (*They fence with the foils they have brought.*)

A LACKEY (*entering*). Pst . . . Flanquin! . . .

ANOTHER (*already there*). Champagne? . . .

THE FIRST (*showing him cards and dice which he takes from his doublet*). See, here be cards and dice. (*He seats himself on the floor.*) Let's play.

THE SECOND (*doing the same*). Good; I am with you, villain!

FIRST LACKEY (*taking from his pocket a candle-end, which he lights, and sticks on the floor*). I made free to provide myself with light at my master's expense!

A GUARDSMAN (*to a* SHOP-GIRL *who advances*). 'Twas prettily done to come before the lights were lit! (*He takes her round the waist.*)

ONE OF THE FENCERS (*receiving a thrust*). A hit!

ONE OF THE CARD-PLAYERS. Clubs!

THE GUARDSMAN (*following the girl*). A kiss!

THE SHOP-GIRL (*struggling to free herself*). They're looking!

THE GUARDSMAN (*drawing her to a dark corner*). No fear! No one can see!

A MAN (*sitting on the ground with others, who have brought their provisions*). By coming early, one can eat in comfort.

A BURGHER (*conducting his son*). Let us sit here, son.

A CARD-PLAYER. Triple ace!

A MAN (*taking a bottle from under his cloak, and also seating himself on the floor*). A tippler may well quaff his Burgundy (*he drinks*) in the Burgundy Hotel!

THE BURGHER (*to his son*). 'Faith! A man might think he had fallen in a bad house here! (*He points with his cane to the drunkard.*) What with topers! (*one of the fencers in breaking off, jostles him*) brawlers! (*he stumbles into the midst of the card-players*) gamblers!

THE GUARDSMAN (*behind him, still teasing the* SHOP-GIRL). Come, one kiss!

THE BURGHER (*hurriedly pulling his son away*). By all the holies! And this, my boy, is the theater where they played Rotrou erewhile.

THE YOUNG MAN. Ay, and Corneille!

A TROOP OF PAGES (*hand-in-hand, enter dancing the farandole, and singing*). Tra' a la, la, la, la, la, la, la, lére . . .

THE DOORKEEPER (*sternly, to the* PAGES). You pages there, none of your tricks! . . .

FIRST PAGE (*with an air of wounded dignity*). Oh, sir!—such a suspicion! . . . (*Briskly, to the* SECOND PAGE, *the moment the* DOORKEEPER'S *back is turned.*) Have you string?

THE SECOND. Ay, and a fish-hook with it.

FIRST PAGE. We can angle for wigs, then, up there i' th' gallery.

A PICKPOCKET (*gathering about him some evil-looking youths*). Hark ye, young cut-purses, lend an ear, while I give you your first lesson in thieving.

SECOND PAGE (*calling up to others in the top galleries*). You there! Have you peashooters?

THIRD PAGE (*from above*). Ay, have we, and peas withal! (*He blows, and peppers them with peas.*)

THE YOUNG MAN (*to his father*). What piece do they give us?

THE BURGHER. "Clorise."

THE YOUNG MAN. Who may the author be?

THE BURGHER. Master Balthazar Baro. It is a play! . . . (*He goes up arm-in-arm with his son.*)

THE PICKPOCKET (*to his* PUPILS). Have a care, above all, of the lace knee-ruffles—cut them off!

A SPECTATOR (*to another, showing him a corner in the gallery*). I was up there, the first night of the "Cid."

THE PICKPOCKET (*making with his fingers the gesture of filching*). Thus for watches——

THE BURGHER (*coming down again with his son*). Ah! You shall presently see some renowned actors . . .

THE PICKPOCKET (*making the gestures of one who pulls something stealthily, with little jerks*). Thus for handkerchiefs——

THE BURGHER. Montfleury . . .

SOME ONE (*shouting from the upper gallery*). Light up, below there!

THE BURGHER. . . . Bellerose, L'Epy, La Beaupré, Jodelet!

A PAGE (*in the pit*). Here comes the buffet-girl!

THE BUFFET-GIRL (*taking her place behind the buffet.*) Oranges, milk, raspberry-water, cedar bitters!

. . .

[*A hubbub outside the door is heard.*

A FALSETTO VOICE. Make place, brutes!

A LACKEY (*astonished*). The Marquises!—in the pit? . . .

ANOTHER LACKEY. Oh! only for a minute or two!

[*Enter a band of young* MARQUISES.

A MARQUIS (*seeing that the hall is half empty*). What now! So we make our entrance like a pack of woolen-drapers! Peaceably, without disturbing the folk, or treading on their toes!—Oh, fie! fie! (*Recognizing some other gentlemen who have entered a little before him.*) Cuigy! Brissaille! (*Greetings and embraces.*)

CUIGY. True to our word! . . . Troth, we are here before the candles are lit.

THE MARQUIS. Ay, indeed! Enough! I am of an ill humor.

ANOTHER. Nay, nay, Marquis! see, for your consolation, they are coming to light up!

ALL THE AUDIENCE (*welcoming the entrance of the lighter*). Ah! . . .

[*They form in groups round the lusters as they are lit. Some people have taken their seats in the galleries.* LIGNIERE, *a distinguished-looking roué, with disordered shirt-front arm-in-arm with* CHRISTIAN DE NEUVILLETTE. CHRISTIAN, *who is dressed elegantly, but rather behind the fashion, seems preoccupied, and keeps looking at the boxes.* CHRISTIAN, LIGNIERE *and* LE BRET.

CUIGY. Ligniere!

BRISSAILLE (*laughing*). Not drunk as yet?

LIGNIERE (*aside to* CHRISTIAN). I may introduce you? (CHRISTIAN *nods in assent.*) Baron de Neuvillette. (*Bows.*)

THE AUDIENCE (*applauding as the first luster is lighted and drawn up*). Ah!

CUIGY (*to* BRISSAILLE, *looking at* CHRISTIAN). 'Tis a pretty fellow!

FIRST MARQUIS (*who has overheard*). Pooh!

LIGNIERE (*introducing them to* CHRISTIAN). My lords De Cuigy. De Brissaille . . .

CHRISTIAN (*bowing*). Delighted! . . .

FIRST MARQUIS (*to* SECOND). He is not ill to look at, but certes, he is not costumed in the latest mode.

LIGNIERE (*to* CUIGY). This gentleman comes from Touraine.

CHRISTIAN. Yes, I have scarce been twenty days in Paris; to-morrow I join the Guards, in the Cadets.

FIRST MARQUIS (*watching the people who are coming into the boxes*). There is the wife of the Chief-Justice.

THE BUFFET-GIRL. Oranges, milk . . .

THE VIOLINISTS (*tuning up*). La—la——

CUIGY (*to* CHRISTIAN, *pointing to the hall, which is filling fast*). 'Tis crowded.

CHRISTIAN. Yes, indeed.

FIRST MARQUIS. All the great world!

[*They recognize and name the different elegantly dressed ladies who enter the boxes, bowing low to them. The ladies send smiles in answer.*

SECOND MARQUIS. Madame de Guémenée.

CUIGY. Madame de Bois-Dauphin.

FIRST MARQUIS. Adored by us all!

BRISSAILLE. Madame de Chavigny . . .

SECOND MARQUIS. Who sports with our poor hearts! . . .

LIGNIERE. Ha! so Monsieur de Corneille has come back from Rouen!

THE YOUNG MAN (*to his father*). Is the Academy here?

THE BURGHER. Oh, ay, I see several of them. There is Boudu, Boissat, and Cureau de la Chambre, Porchères, Colomby, Bourzeys, Bourdon, Arbaud . . . all names that will live! 'Tis fine!

FIRST MARQUIS. Attention! Here come our *précieuses;* Barthénoide, Urimedonte, Cassandace, Félixerie. . . .

SECOND MARQUIS. Ah! How exquisite their fancy names are! Do you know them all, Marquis?

FIRST MARQUIS. Ay, Marquis, I do, every one!

LIGNIERE (*drawing* CHRISTIAN *aside*). Friend, I but came here to give you pleasure. The lady comes not. I will betake me again to my pet vice.

CHRISTIAN (*persuasively*). No, no! You, who are ballad-maker to Court and City alike, can tell me better than any who the lady is for whom I die of love. Stay yet awhile.

THE FIRST VIOLIN (*striking his bow on the desk*). Gentlemen violinists! (*He raises his bow.*)

THE BUFFET-GIRL. Macaroons, lemon-drink . . . (*The violins begin to play.*)

CHRISTIAN. Ah! I fear me she is coquettish, and over nice and fastidious! I, who am so poor of wit, how dare I speak to her—how address her? This language that they speak to-day—ay, and write—confounds me; I am but an honest soldier, and timid withal. She has ever her place, there, on the right—the empty box, see you!

LIGNIERE (*making as if to go*). I must go.

CHRISTIAN (*detaining him*). Nay, stay.

LIGNIERE. I cannot. D'Assoucy waits me at the tavern, and here one dies of thirst.

THE BUFFET-GIRL (*passing before him with a tray*). Orange drink?

LIGNIERE. Ugh!

THE BUFFET-GIRL. Milk?

LIGNIERE. Pah!

THE BUFFET-GIRL. Rivesalte?

LIGNIERE. Stay. (*To* CHRISTIAN.) I will remain awhile.—Let me taste this rivesalte. (*He sits by the buffet; the girl pours some out for him.*)

CRIES (*from all the audience, at the entrance of a plump little man, joyously excited*). Ah! Ragueneau!

LIGNIERE (*to* CHRISTIAN). 'Tis the famous tavern-keeper Ragueneau.

RAGUENEAU (*dressed in the Sunday clothes of a pastry-cook, going up quickly to* LIGNIERE). Sir, have you seen Monsieur de Cyrano?

LIGNIERE (*introducing him to* CHRISTIAN). The pastry-cook of the actors and the poets!

RAGUENEAU (*overcome*). You do me too great honor . . .

LIGNIERE. Nay, hold your peace, Mæcenas that you are!

RAGUENEAU. True, these gentlemen employ me . . .

LIGNIERE. On credit!
He is himself a poet of a pretty talent . . .

RAGUENEAU. So they tell me.

LIGNIERE. —Mad after poetry!

RAGUENEAU. 'Tis true that, for a little ode . . .
LIGNIERE. You give a tart . . .
RAGUENEAU. Oh!—a tartlet!
LIGNIERE. Brave fellow! he would fain excuse himself!
—And for a triolet, now, did you not give in exchange . . .
RAGUENEAU. Some little rolls.
LIGNIERE (*severely*). They were milk-rolls! And as for the theater, which you love?
RAGUENEAU. Oh! to distraction!
LIGNIERE. How pay you your tickets, ha?—with cakes. Your place, to-night, come tell me in my ear, what did it cost you?
RAGUENEAU. Four custards, and fifteen cream-puffs. (*He looks round on all sides.*) Monsieur de Cyrano is not here? 'Tis strange.
LIGNIERE. Why so?
RAGUENEAU. Montfleury plays!
LIGNIERE. Ay, 'tis true that that old wine-barrel is to take Phœdon's part to-night; but what matter is that to Cyrano?
RAGUENEAU. How? Know you not? He has got a hot hate for Montfleury, and so!—has forbid him strictly to show his face on the stage for one whole month.
LIGNIERE (*drinking his fourth glass*). Well?
RAGUENEAU. Montfleury will play!
CUIGY. He can not hinder that.
RAGUENEAU. Oh! oh! that I have come to see!
FIRST MARQUIS. Who is this Cyrano?
CUIGY. A fellow well skilled in all tricks of fence.
SECOND MARQUIS. Is he of noble birth?
CUIGY. Ah, noble enough. He is a cadet in the Guards. (*Pointing to a gentleman who is going up and down the hall as if searching for some one.*) But 'tis his friend Le Bret, yonder, who can best tell you. (*He pulls him.*) Le Bret! (LE BRET *comes towards them.*) Seek you for De Bergerac?
LE BRET. Ay; I am uneasy . . .
CUIGY. Is it not true that he is the strangest of men?
LE BRET (*tenderly*). True, that he is the choicest of earthly beings!
RAGUENEAU. Poet!
CUIGY. Soldier!
BRISSAILLE. Philosopher!
LE BRET. Musician!
LIGNIERE. And of how fantastic a presence!
RAGUENEAU. Marry, 'twould puzzle even our grim painter Philippe de Champaigne to portray him! Methinks, whimsical, wild,

comical as he is, only Jacques Callot, now dead and gone, had succeeded better, and had made of him the maddest fighter of all his visored crew—with his triple-plumed beaver and six-pointed doublet—the sword-point sticking up 'neath his mantle like an insolent cocktail! He's prouder than all the fierce Artabans of whom Gascony has ever been and will ever be the prolific Alma Mater! Above his Toby ruff he carries a nose!—ah, good my lords, what a nose is his! When one sees it one is fain to cry aloud, "Nay! 'tis too much! He plays a joke on us!" Then one laughs, says, "He will anon take it off." But no!—Monsieur de Bergerac always keeps it on.

LE BRET (*throwing back his head*). He keeps it on—and cleaves in two any man who dares remark on it!

RAGUENEAU (*proudly*). His sword—'tis one half of the Fates' shears!

FIRST MARQUIS (*shrugging his shoulders*). He will not come!

RAGUENEAU. I say he will! and I wager a fowl—*à la Ragueneau.*

THE MARQUIS (*laughing*). Good!

[*Murmurs of admiration in the hall.* ROXANE *has just appeared in her box. She seats herself in front, the duenna at the back.* CHRISTIAN, *who is paying the* BUFFET-GIRL, *does not see her entrance.*

SECOND MARQUIS (*with little cries of joy*). Ah, gentlemen! she is fearfully—terribly—ravishing!

FIRST MARQUIS. When one looks at her one thinks of a peach smiling at a strawberry!

SECOND MARQUIS. And what freshness! A man approaching her too near might chance to get a bad chill at the heart!

CHRISTIAN (*raising his head, sees* ROXANE, *and catches* LIGNIERE *by the arm*). 'Tis she!

LIGNIERE. Ah! is it she?

CHRISTIAN. Ay, tell me quick—I am afraid.

LIGNIERE (*tasting his rivesalte in sips*). Magdaleine Robin—Roxane, so called! A subtle wit—a *precieuse.*

CHRISTIAN. Woe is me!

LIGNIERE. Free. An orphan. The cousin of Cyrano, of whom we were now speaking.

[*At this moment an elegant nobleman, with blue ribbon across his breast, enters the box, and talks with* ROXANE, *standing.*

CHRISTIAN (*starting*). Who is yonder man?

LIGNIERE (*who is becoming tipsy, winking at him*). Ha! ha! Count de Guiche. Enamored of her. But wedded to the niece of

Armand de Richelieu. Would fain marry Roxane to a certain sorry fellow, one Monsieur de Valvert, a viscount—and—accommodating! She will none of that bargain; but De Guiche is powerful, and can persecute the daughter of a plain untitled gentleman. More by token, I myself have exposed this cunning plan of his to the world, in a song which . . . Ho! he must rage at me! The end hit home. . . . Listen! (*He gets up staggering, and raises his glass, ready to sing.*)

CHRISTIAN. No. Good-night.

LIGNIERE. Where go you?

CHRISTIAN. To Monsieur de Valvert!

LIGNIERE. Have a care! It is he who will kill you (*showing him* ROXANE *by a look*). Stay where you are—she is looking at you.

CHRISTIAN. It is true! (*He stands looking at her. The group of pickpockets seeing him thus, head in air and open-mouthed, draw near to him.*)

LIGNIERE. 'Tis I who am going. I am athirst! And they expect me—in the taverns! (*He goes out, reeling.*)

LE BRET (*who has been all round the hall, coming back to* RAGUENEAU *reassured*). No sign of Cyrano.

RAGUENEAU (*incredulously*). All the same . . .

LE BRET. A hope is left to me—that he has not seen the playbill!

THE AUDIENCE. Begin, begin!

A MARQUIS (*watching* DE GUICHE, *who comes down from* ROXANE'S *box, and crosses the pit surrounded by obsequious noblemen, among them the* VICOMTE DE VALVERT). He pays a fine court, your De Guiche!

ANOTHER. Faugh! . . . Another Gascon!

THE FIRST. Ay, but the cold, supple Gascon—that is the stuff success is made of! Believe me, we had best make our bow to him. (*They go toward* DE GUICHE.)

SECOND MARQUIS. What fine ribbons! How call you the color, Count de Guiche? "Kiss me, my darling," or "Timid Fawn"?

DE GUICHE. 'Tis the color called "Sick Spaniard."

FIRST MARQUIS. 'Faith! The color speaks truth, for, thanks to your valor, things will soon go ill for Spain in Flanders.

DE GUICHE. I go on the stage! Will you come? (*He goes toward the stage, followed by the* MARQUISES *and gentlemen. Turning, he calls.*) Come you, Valvert!

CHRISTIAN (*who is watching and listening, starts on hearing this name*). The Viscount! Ah! I will throw full in his face my . . . (*He puts his hand in his pocket, and finds there the hand of a pickpocket who is about to rob him. He turns round*). Hey?

THE PICKPOCKET. Oh!

CHRISTIAN (*holding him tightly*). I was looking for a glove.

THE PICKPOCKET (*smiling piteously*). And you find a hand. (*Changing his tone, quickly and in a whisper.*) Let me but go, and I will deliver you a secret.

CHRISTIAN (*still holding him*). What is it?

THE PICKPOCKET. Lignière . . . he who has just left you . . .

CHRISTIAN (*same play*). Well?

THE PICKPOCKET. His life is in peril. A song writ by him has given offense in high places—and a hundred men—I am of them—are posted to-night . . .

CHRISTIAN. A hundred men! By whom posted?

THE PICKPOCKET. I may not say—a secret . . .

CHRISTIAN (*shrugging his shoulders*). Oh!

THE PICKPOCKET (*with great dignity*). . . . Of the profession.

CHRISTIAN. Where are they posted?

THE PICKPOCKET. At the Porte de Nesle. On his way homeward. Warn him.

CHRISTIAN (*letting go his wrists*). But where can I find him?

THE PICKPOCKET. Run round to all the taverns—The Golden Wine Press, The Pine Cone, The Belt that Bursts, The Two Torches, The Three Funnels, and at each leave a word that shall put him on his guard.

CHRISTIAN. Good—I fly! Ah, the scoundrels! A hundred men 'gainst one! (*Looking lovingly at* ROXANE.) Ah, to leave her! . . . (*looking with rage at* VALVERT) and him! . . . But save Lignière I must!

[*He hurries out.* DE GUICHE, *the* VISCOUNT, *the* MARQUISES, *have all disappeared behind the curtain to take their places on the benches placed on the stage. The pit is quite full; the galleries and boxes are also crowded.*

THE AUDIENCE. Begin!

A BURGHER (*whose wig is drawn up on the end of a string by a* PAGE *in the upper gallery*). My wig!

CRIES OF DELIGHT. He is bald! Bravo, pages—ha! ha! ha! . . .

THE BURGHER (*furious, shaking his first*). Young villain!

LAUGHTER AND CRIES (*beginning very loud, and dying gradually away*). Ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! (*Total silence.*)

LE BRET (*astonished*). What means this sudden silence? . . . (*A* SPECTATOR *says something to him in a low voice.*) Is't true?

THE SPECTATOR. I have just heard it on good authority.

MURMURS (*spreading through the hall*). Hush! Is it he? No! Ay, I say! In the box with the bars in front! The Cardinal! The Cardinal! The Cardinal!

A PAGE. The devil! We shall have to behave ourselves . . . (*A knock is heard upon the stage. Every one is motionless. A pause.*)

THE VOICE OF A MARQUIS (*in the silence, behind the curtain*). Snuff that candle!

ANOTHER MARQUIS (*putting his head through the opening in the curtain*). A chair!

[*A chair is passed from hand to hand, over the heads of the spectators. The* MARQUIS *takes it and disappears, after blowing some kisses to the boxes.*

A SPECTATOR. Silence!

[*Three knocks are heard on the stage. The curtain opens in the centre Tableau. The* MARQUISES *in insolent attitudes seated on each side of the stage. The scene represents a pastoral landscape. Four little lustres light the stage; the violins play softly.*

LE BRET (*in a low voice to* RAGUENEAU). Montfleury comes on the scene?

RAGUENEAU (*also in a low voice*). Ay, 'tis he who begins.

LE BRET. Cyrano is not here.

RAGUENEAU. I have lost my wager.

LE BRET. 'Tis all the better!

[*An air on the drone-pipes is heard, and* MONTFLEURY *enters, enormously stout, in an Arcadian shepherd's dress, a hat wreathed with roses dropping over one ear, blowing into a ribboned drone pipe.*

THE PIT (*applauding*). Bravo, Montfleury! Montfleury!

MONTFLEURY (*after bowing low, begins the part of Phædon*).

"Heureux qui loin des cours, dans un lieu solitaire,
Se prescrit à soi-mêne un exil volontaire,
Et qui, lorsque Zéphire a soufflé sur les bois . . ."

A VOICE (*from the middle of the pit*). Villain! Did I not forbid you to show your face here for a month? (*General stupor. Every one turns round. Murmurs.*)

DIFFERENT VOICES. Hey?—What?—What is't? . . . (*The people stand up in the boxes to look.*)

CUIGY. 'Tis he!

LE BRET (*terrified*). Cyrano!

THE VOICE. King of clowns! Leave the stage this instant!

ALL THE AUDIENCE (*indignantly*). Oh!

MONTFLEURY. But . . .
THE VOICE. Do you dare defy me?
DIFFERENT VOICES (*from the pit and the boxes*). Peace! Enough!—Play on, Montfleury—fear nothing!
MONTFLEURY (*in a trembling voice*). "Heureux qui loin des cours, dans un lieu sol——"
THE VOICE (*more fiercely*). Well! Chief of all the blackguards, must I come and give you a taste of my cane? (*A hand holding a cane starts up over the heads of the spectators.*)
MONTFLEURY (*in a voice that trembles more and more*). "Heureux qui . . ." (*The cane is shaken.*)
THE VOICE. Off the stage!
THE PIT. Oh!
MONTFLEURY (*choking*). "Heureux qui loin des cours . . ."
CYRANO (*appearing suddenly in the pit, standing on a chair, his arms crossed, his beaver cocked fiercely, his mustache bristling, his nose terrible to see*). Ah! I shall be angry in a minute! . . . (*Sensation.*)
MONTFLEURY (*to the* MARQUISES). Come to my help, my lords!
A MARQUIS (*carelessly*). Go on! Go on!
CYRANO. Fat man, take warning! If you go on, I
Shall feel myself constrained to cuff your face!
THE MARQUIS. Have done!
CYRANO. And if these lords hold not their tongue
Shall feel constrained to make them taste my cane!
ALL THE MARQUISES (*rising*). Enough! . . . Montfleury . . .
CYRANO. If he goes not quick
I will cut off his ears and slit him up!
A VOICE. But . . .
CYRANO. Out he goes!
ANOTHER VOICE. Yet . . .
CYRANO. Is he not gone yet?
[*He makes the gesture of turning up his cuffs.*
Good! I shall mount the stage now, buffet-wise,
To carve this fine Italian sausage—thus!
MONTFLEURY (*trying to be dignified*). You outrage Thalia in insulting me!
CYRANO (*very politely*). If that Muse, Sir, who knows you not at all,
Could claim acquaintance with you—oh, believe
(Seeing how urn-like, fat, and slow you are)
That she would make you taste her buskin's sole!
THE PIT. Montfleury! Montfleury! Come—Baro's play!

CYRANO (*to those who are calling out*). I pray you have a care!
If you go on
My scabbard soon will render up its blade!
[*The circle round him widens.*
THE CROWD (*drawing back*). Take care!
CYRANO (*to* MONTFLEURY). Leave the stage!
THE CROWD (*coming near and grumbling*). Oh!——
CYRANO. Did some one speak? [*They draw back again.*
A VOICE (*singing at the back*). Monsieur de Cyrano displays his tyrannies:
A fig for tyrants! What, ho!
Come! Play us "La Clorise!"
ALL THE PIT (*singing*). "La Clorise!" "La Clorise!" . . .
CYRANO. Let me but hear once more that foolish rhyme,
I slaughter every man of you.
A BOURGEOIS. Oh! Are you Samson?
CYRANO. Yes, Samson! Will you lend your jawbone, Sir?
A LADY (*in the boxes*). Outrageous!
A LORD. Scandalous!
A BOURGEOIS. 'Tis most annoying!
A PAGE. Fair good sport!
THE PIT. Kss!—Montfleury . . . Cyrano!
CYRANO. Silence!
THE PIT (*wildly excited*). Ho-o-o-o-h! Quack! Cock-a-doodle-doo!
CYRANO. I order——
A PAGE. Miow!
CYRANO. I order silence, all!
And challenge the whole pit collectively!—
I write your names!—Approach, young heroes here!
Each in his turn! I cry the numbers out!—
Now which of you will come to ope the lists?
You, Sir! No! You? No! The first duellist
Shall be dispatched by me with honors due!
Let all who long for death hold up their hands! [*A silence.*
Modest? You fear to see my naked blade?
Not one name?—Not one hand?—Good, I proceed!
[*Turning toward the stage, where* MONTFLEURY *waits in an agony.*
The theater's too full, congested,—I
Would clear it out. . . . If not . . .
[*Puts his hand on his sword.*
The knife must act!
MONTFLEURY. I . . .

CYRANO (*leaves his chair, and settles himself in the middle of the circle which has formed*).
I will clap my hands thrice, thus—full moon!
At the third clap, eclipse yourself!
THE PIT (*amused*). Ah!
CYRANO (*clapping his hands*). One!
MONTFLEURY. I . . .
A VOICE (*in the boxes*). Stay!
THE PIT. He stays . . . he goes . . . he stays . . .
MONTFLEURY. I think . . .
Gentlemen, . . .
CYRANO. Two!
MONTFLEURY. I think 'twere wisest . . .
CYRANO. Three!
[MONTFLEURY *disappears as through a trap. Tempest of laughs, whistling cries, etc.*
THE WHOLE HOUSE. Coward . . . come back!
CYRANO (*delighted, sits back in his chair, arms crossed*). Come back if you dare!
A BOURGEOIS. Call for the orator!
[BELLEROSE *comes forward and bows.*
THE BOXES. Ah! here's Bellerose!
BELLEROSE (*elegantly*). My noble lords . . .
THE PIT. No! no! Jodelet!
JODELET (*advancing, speaking through his nose*). Calves!
THE PIT. Ah! bravo! good! go on!
JODELET. No bravos, Sirs!
The fat tragedian whom you all love
Felt . . .
THE PIT. Coward!
JODELET. . . . was obliged to go.
THE PIT. Come back!
SOME. No.
OTHERS. Yes.
A YOUNG MAN (*to* CYRANO). But pray, Sir, for what reason, say,
Hate you Montfleury?
CYRANO (*graciously, still seated*). Youthful gander, know
I have two reasons—either will suffice.
Primo. An actor villainous! who mouths,
And heaves up like a bucket from a well
The verses that should, bird-like, fly! *Secundo*—
That is my secret . . .

THE OLD BOURGEOIS (*behind him*). Shameful! You deprive us
Of the "Clorise!" I must insist . .
CYRANO (*turning his chair toward the* BOURGEOIS *espectfully*).
Old mule!
The verses of old Baro are not worth
A doit! I'm glad to interrupt .
THE PRECIEUSES (*in the boxes*). Our Baro!—
My dear! How dares he venture! . . .
CYRANO (*turning his chair toward the boxes gallantly*). Fairest ones,
Radiate, bloom, hold to our lips the cup
Of dreams intoxicating, Hebe-like!
Or, when death strikes, charm death with your sweet smiles!
Inspire our verse, but—criticise it not!
BELLEROSE. We must give back the entrance fees!
CYRANO (*turning his chair toward the stage*). Bellerose,
You make the first intelligent remark!
Would I rend Thespis' sacred mantle? Nay!
[*He rises and throws a bag on the stage.*
Catch then the purse I throw, and hold your peace!
THE HOUSE (*dazzled*). Ah! Oh!
JODELET (*catching the purse dexterously and weighing it*).
At this price, you've authority
To come each night, and stop "Clorise," Sir!
THE PIT. Ho! . . .
Ho! ho! . . .
JODELET. E'en if you chase us in a pack! . . .
BELLEROSE. Clear out the hall! . . .
JODELET. Get you all gone at once!
[*The people begin to go out, while* CYRANO *looks on with satisfaction. But the crowd soon stop on hearing the following scene, and remain where they are. The women, who, with their mantles on, are already standing up in the boxes, stop to listen, and finally reseat themselves.*
LE BRET (*to* CYRANO). 'Tis mad! . . .
A BORE (*coming up to* CYRANO).
The actor Montfleury! 'Tis shameful!
Why, he's protected by the Duke of Candal!
Have you a patron?
CYRANO. No!
THE BORE. No patron? . . .
CYRANO. None!

THE BORE. What! no great lord to shield you with his name?
CYRANO (*irritated*). No, I have told you twice! Must I repeat?
No! no protector . . (*His hand on his sword*). A protectress . . . here!
THE BORE. But you must leave the town?
CYRANO. Well, that depends!
THE BORE. The Duke has a long arm!
CYRANO. But not so long
As mine, when it is lengthened out . . .
(*Shows his sword.*) As thus!
THE BORE. You think not to contend?
CYRANO. 'Tis my idea!
THE BORE. But . . .
CYRANO. Show your heels, now!
THE BORE. But I . . .
CYRANO. Show your heels!
Or tell me why you stare so at my nose!
THE BORE (*staggered*). I . . .
CYRANO (*walking straight up to him*). Well, what is there strange?
THE BORE (*drawing back*). Your Grace mistakes!
CYRANO. How now? Is't soft and dangling, like a trunk? . . .
THE BORE (*same play*). I never . . .
CYRANO. Is it crook'd, like an owl's beak?
THE BORE. I . . .
CYRANO. Do you see a wart upon the tip?
THE BORE. Nay . . .
CYRANO. Or a fly, that takes the air there? What
Is there to stare at?
THE BORE. Oh . . .
CYRANO. What do you see?
THE BORE. But I was careful not to look—knew better.
CYRANO. And why not look at it, and if you please?
THE BORE. I was . . .
CYRANO. Oh! it disgusts you!
THE BORE. Sir!
CYRANO. Its hue
Unwholesome seems to you?
THE BORE. Sir!
CYRANO. Or its shape?
THE BORE. No, on the contrary! . . .
CYRANO. Why then that air
Disparaging?—perchance you think it large?
THE BORE (*stammering*). No! small, quite small—minute!

CYRANO. Minute! What now?
Accuse me of a thing ridiculous!
Small—my nose?
THE BORE. Heaven help me!
CYRANO. 'Tis enormous!
Old Flathead, empty-headed meddler, know
That I am proud possessing such appendice.
'Tis well known, a big nose is indicative
Of a soul affable, and kind, and courteous,
Liberal, brave, just like myself, and such
As you can never dare to dream yourself,
Rascal contemptible! For that witless face
That my hand soon will come to cuff—is all
As empty . . . [*He cuffs him.*
THE BORE. Aie!
CYRANO. —of pride, of aspiration,
Of feeling, poetry—of godlike spark,
Of all that appertains to my big nose,
[*He turns him by the shoulders, suiting the action to the word.*
As . . . what my boot will shortly come and kick!
THE BORE (*running away*). Help! Call the Guard!
CYRANO. Take notice, boobies all,
Who find my visage's center ornament
A thing to jest at—that it is my wont—
An if the jester's noble—ere we part
To let him taste my steel, and not my boot!
DE GUICHE (*who, with the* MARQUISES, *has come down from the stage*). But he becomes a nuisance!
THE VISCOUNT DE VALVERT (*shrugging his shoulders*). Swaggerer!
DE GUICHE. Will no one put him down? . . .
THE VISCOUNT. No one! But wait!
I'll treat him to . . . one of my quips! . . . See here! . . .
[*He goes up to* CYRANO, *who is watching him, and with a conceited air.*
Sir, your nose is . . . hm . . . it is . . . very big!
CYRANO (*gravely*). Very!
THE VISCOUNT (*laughing*). Ha!
CYRANO (*imperturbably*). Is that all? . . .
THE VISCOUNT. What do you mean?
CYRANO. Ah no! young blade! That was a trifle short!
You might have said at least a hundred things
By varying the tone . . . like this, suppose, . . .

Aggressive: "Sir, if I had such a nose
I'd amputate it!" Friendly: "When you sup
It must annoy you, dipping in your cup;
You need a drinking-bowl of special shape!"
Descriptive: " 'Tis a rock! . . . a peak! . . . a cape!
—A cape, forsooth! 'Tis a peninsula!"
Curious: "How serves that oblong capsular?
For scissor-sheath? or pot to hold your ink?"
Gracious: "You love the little birds, I think?
I see you've managed with a fond research
To find their tiny claws a roomy perch!"
Truculent: "When you smoke your pipe . . . suppose
That the tobacco-smoke spouts from your nose—
Do not the neighbors, as the fumes rise higher,
Cry terror-struck: 'The chimney is afire'?"
Considerate: "Take care, . . . your head bowed low
By such a weight . . . lest head o'er heels you go!"
Tender: "Pray get a small umbrella made,
Lest its bright color in the sun should fade!"
Pedantic: "That beast Aristophanes
Names Hippocamelelephantoles
Must have possessed just such a solid lump
Of flesh and bone, beneath his forehead's bump!"
Cavalier: "The last fashion, friend, that hook?
To hang your hat on? 'Tis a useful crook!"
Emphatic: "No wind, O majestic nose,
Can give *thee* cold!—save when the mistral blows!"
Dramatic: "When it bleeds, what a Red Sea!"
Admiring: "Sign for a perfumery!"
Lyric: "Is this a conch? . . . a Triton you?"
Simple: "When is the monument on view?"
Rustic: "That thing a nose? Marry-come-up!
'Tis a dwarf pumpkin, or a prize turnip!"
Military: "Point against cavalry!"
Practical: "Put it in a lottery!
Assuredly 'twould be the biggest prize!"
Or . . . parodying Pyramus' sighs . . .
"Behold the nose that mars the harmony
Of its master's phiz! blushing its treachery!"
—Such, my dear sir, is what you might have said,
Had you of wit or letters the least jot:
But, O most lamentable man!—of wit
You never had an atom, and of letters

You have three letters only!—they spell Ass!
And—had you had the necessary wit,
To serve me all the pleasantries I quote
Before this noble audience . . . e'en so,
You would not have been let to utter one—
Nay, not the half or quarter of such jest!
I take them from myself all in good part,
But not from any other man that breathes!

DE GUICHE (*trying to draw away the dismayed* VISCOUNT).
Come away, Viscount!

THE VISCOUNT (*choking with rage*). Hear his arrogance!
A country lout who . . . who . . . has got no gloves!
Who goes out without sleeve-knots, ribbons, lace!

CYRANO. True; all my elegances are within.
I do not prank myself out, puppy-like;
My toilet is more thorough, if less gay;
I would not sally forth—a half-washed-out
Affront upon my cheek—a conscience
Yellow-eyed, bilious, from its sodden sleep,
A ruffled honor, . . . scruples grimed and dull!
I show no bravery of shining gems.
Truth, Independence, are my fluttering plumes.
'Tis not my form I lace to make me slim,
But brace my soul with efforts as with stays,
Covered with exploits, not with ribbon-knots,
My spirit bristling high like your mustaches,
I, traversing the crowds and chattering groups
Make Truth ring bravely out like clash of spurs!

THE VISCOUNT. But, Sir . . .

CYRANO. I wear no gloves? and what of that?
I had one, . . . remnant of an old worn pair,
And, knowing not what else to do with it,
I threw it in the face of . . . some young fool.

THE VISCOUNT. Base scoundrel! Rascally flat-footed lout!

CYRANO (*taking off his hat, and bowing as if the* VISCOUNT *had introduced himself*). Ah? . . . and I, Cyrano Savinien
Hercule de Bergerac. [*Laughter.*

THE VISCOUNT (*angrily*). Buffoon!

CYRANO (*calling out as if he had been seized with the cramp*).
Aie! aie!

THE VISCOUNT (*who was going away, turns back*).
What on earth is the fellow saying now?

CYRANO (*with grimaces of pain*). It must be moved—it's getting stiff, I vow,
—This comes of leaving it in idleness!
Aie! . . .

THE VISCOUNT. What ails you?

CYRANO. The cramp! cramp in my sword!

THE VISCOUNT (*drawing his sword*). Good!

CYRANO. You shall feel a charming little stroke!

THE VISCOUNT (*contemptuously*). Poet! . . .

CYRANO. Ay, poet, Sir! In proof of which,
While we fence, presto! all extempore
I will compose a ballade.

THE VISCOUNT. A ballade?

CYRANO. Belike you know not what a ballade is.

THE VISCOUNT. But . . .

CYRANO (*reciting, as if repeating a lesson*). Know then that the ballade should contain
Three eight-versed couplets . . .

THE VISCOUNT (*stamping*). Oh!

CYRANO (*still reciting*). And an *envoi*
Of four lines . . .

THE VISCOUNT. You . . .

CYRANO. I'll make one while we fight,
And touch you at the final line.

THE VISCOUNT. No!

CYRANO. No? [*declaiming.*
The duel in Hotel of Burgundy—fought
By De Bergerac and a good-for-naught!

THE VISCOUNT. What may that be an if you please?

CYRANO. The title.

THE HOUSE (*in great excitement*). Give room!—Good sport!—Make place!—Fair play!—No noise!

[*Tableau. A circle of curious spectators in the pit; the* MARQUISES *and* OFFICERS *mingled with the common people; the* PAGES *climbing on each other's shoulders to see better. All the women standing up in the boxes. To the right,* DE GUICHE *and his retinue. Left,* LE BRET, RAGUENEAU, CYRANO, *etc.*

CYRANO (*shutting his eyes for a second*). Wait while I choose my rhymes. . . . I have them now!
[*He suits the action to each word.*
I gayly doff my beaver low,
And, freeing hand and heel,

My heavy mantle off I throw,
And I draw my polished steel;
Graceful as Phœbus, round I wheel,
Alert as Scaramouch,
A word in your ear, Sir Spark, I steal—
At the *envoi's* end, I touch! [*They engage.*
Better for you had you lain low;
Where skewer my cock? In the heel?—
In the heart, your ribbon blue below?—
In the hip, and make you kneel?
Ho for the music of clashing steel!
—What now?—A hit? Not much!
'Twill be in the paunch the stroke I steal,
When, at the *envoi,* I touch.
Oh, for a rhyme, a rhyme in *o?*—
You wriggle, starch-white, my eel?
A rhyme! a rhyme! the white feather you *show!*
Tac! I parry the point of your steel;
—The point you hoped to make me feel;
I open the line, now clutch
Your spit, Sir Scullion—show your zeal!
At the *envoi's* end, I touch.
[*He declaims solemnly.*
Prince, pray Heaven for your soul's weal!
I move a pace—lo, such! and such!
Cut over—feint!
(*Thrusting.*) What ho! You reel?
[*The* Viscount *staggers.* Cyrano *salutes.*
At the *envoi's* end, I touch!

[*Acclamations. Applause in the boxes. Flowers and handkerchiefs are thrown down. The* Officers *surround* Cyrano, *congratulating him.* Ragueneau *dances for joy.* Le Bret *is happy, but anxious. The* Viscount's *friends hold him up and bear him away.*

The Crowd (*with one long shout*). Ah!
A Trooper. 'Tis superb!
A Woman. A pretty stroke!
Ragueneau. A marvel!
A Marquis. A novelty!
Le Bret. O madman!

[*The crowd presses round* Cyrano. *Chorus of* Compliments!

Bravo! Let me congratulate! . . . Quite unsurpassed! . . .

A WOMAN'S VOICE. There is a hero for you! . . .
A MUSKETEER (*advancing to* CYRANO *with outstretched hand*).
Sir, permit;
Naught could be finer—I'm a judge I think;
I stamped, i' faith!—to show my admiration! [*He goes away.*
CYRANO (*to* CUIGY). Who is that gentleman?
CUIGY. Why—D'Artagnan!
LE BRET (*to* CYRANO, *taking his arm*). A word with you! . . .
CYRANO. Wait; let the rabble go! . . .
(*To* BELLEROSE.) May I stay?
BELLEROSE (*respectfully*). Without doubt!
[*Cries are heard outside.*
JODELET (*who has looked out*). They hoot Montfleury!
BELLEROSE (*solemnly*). *Sic transit!* . . .
(*To the* PORTERS.) Sweep—close all, but leave the lights.
We sup, but later on we must return,
For a rehearsal of to-morrow's farce.
[JODELET *and* BELLEROSE *go out, bowing low to* CYRANO.
THE PORTER (*to* CYRANO). You do not dine, Sir?
CYRANO. No. [*The* PORTER *goes out.*
LE BRET. Because?
CYRANO (*proudly*). Because . . . (*Changing his tone as the* PORTER *goes away*). I have no money! . . .
LE BRET (*with the action of throwing a bag*). How! The bag of crowns? . . .
CYRANO. Paternal bounty, in a day, thou'rt sped!
LE BRET. How live the next month? . . .
CYRANO. I have nothing left.
LE BRET. Folly!
CYRANO. But what a graceful action! Think!
THE BUFFET-GIRL (*coughing, behind her counter*). Hum!
[CYRANO *and* LE BRET *turn. She comes timidly forward.*
Sir, my heart mislikes to know you fast.
[*Showing the buffet.*
See, all you need. Serve yourself!
CYRANO (*taking off his hat*). Gentle child,
Although my Gascon pride would else forbid
To take the least bestowal from your hands,
My fear of wounding you outweighs that pride,
And bids accept . . . [*He goes to the buffet.*
A trifle! . . . These few grapes.
[*She offers him the whole bunch. He takes a few.*

Nay, but this bunch! . . .
[*She tries to give him wine, but he stops her.*
A glass of water fair! . . .
And half a macaroon! [*He gives back the other half.*

LE BRET. What foolery!

THE BUFFET-GIRL. Take something else!

CYRANO. I take your hand to kiss.
[*He kisses her hand as though she were a princess.*

THE BUFFET-GIRL. Thank you, kind Sir! [*She courtesies.*
Good-night. [*She goes out.*

CYRANO (*to* LE BRET). Now talk—I listen.
[*He stands at the buffet, and placing before him first the macaroon,*
Dinner! . . . [*Then the grapes.*
Dessert! . . . [*Then the glass of water.*
Wine! . . . [*He seats himself.*
So! And now to table!
Ah! I was hungry, friend, nay, ravenous! [*Eating.*
You said——?

LE BRET. These fops, would-be belligerent,
Will, if you heed them only, turn your head! . . .
Ask people of good sense if you would know
The effect of your fine insolence——

CYRANO (*finishing his macaroon*). Enormous!

LE BRET. The Cardinal . . .

CYRANO (*radiant*). The Cardinal—was there?

LE BRET. Must have thought it . . .

CYRANO. Original, i' faith!

LE BRET. But . . .

CYRANO. He's an author. 'Twill not fail to please him
That I should mar a brother-author's play.

LE BRET. You make too many enemies by far!

CYRANO (*eating his grapes*). How many think you I have made to-night?

LE BRET. Forty, no less, not counting ladies.

CYRANO. Count!

LE BRET. Montfleury first, the bourgeois, then De Guiche,
The Viscount, Baro, the Academy . . .

CYRANO. Enough! I am o'erjoyed!

LE BRET. But these strange ways,
Where will they lead you, at the end? Explain
Your system—come!

CYRANO. I in a labyrinth
Was lost—too many different paths to choose;
I took . . .
LE BRET. Which?
CYRANO. Oh! by far the simplest path . . .
Decided to be admirable in all!
LE BRET (*shrugging his shoulders*). So be it! But the motive of your hate
To Montfleury—come, tell me!
CYRANO (*rising*). This Silenus,
Big-bellied, coarse, still deems himself a peril—
A danger to the love of lovely ladies,
And, while he sputters out his actor's part,
Makes sheep's eyes at their boxes—goggling frog!
I hate him since the evening he presumed
To raise his eyes to hers . . . Meseemed I saw
A slug crawl slavering o'er a flower's petals!
LE BRET (*stupefied*). How now? What? Can it be . . . ?
CYRANO (*laughing bitterly*). That I should love? . . .
(*Changing his tone, gravely.*) I love.
LE BRET. And may I know? . . . You never said . . .
CYRANO. Come now, bethink you! . . . The fond hope to be
Belovèd, e'en by some poor graceless lady,
Is, by this nose of mine for aye bereft me;
—This lengthy nose which, go where'er I will,
Pokes yet a quarter-mile ahead of me;
But I may love—and whom? 'Tis Fate's decree
I love the fairest—how were't otherwise?
LE BRET. The fairest? . . .
CYRANO. Ay, the fairest of the world,
Most brilliant—most refined—most golden-haired!
LE BRET. Who is this lady?
CYRANO. She's a danger mortal,
All unsuspicious—full of charms unconscious,
Like a sweet perfumed rose—a snare of nature,
Within whose petals Cupid lurks in ambush!
He who has seen her smile has known perfection,
—Instilling into trifles grace's essence,
Divinity in every careless gesture;
Not Venus' self can mount her conch blown seaward,
As she can step into her *chaise à porteurs,*
Nor Dian fleet across the woods spring-flowered,
Light as my Lady o'er the stones of Paris! . . .

LE BRET. *Sapristi!* all is clear!
CYRANO. As spiderwebs!
LE BRET. Your cousin, Madeleine Robin?
CYRANO. Roxane!
LE BRET. Well, but so much the better! Tell her so!
She saw your triumph here this very night!
CYRANO. Look well at me—then tell me, with what hope
This vile protuberance can inspire my heart!
I do not lull me with illusions—yet
At times I'm weak: in evening hours dim
I enter some fair pleasance, perfumed sweet;
With my poor ugly devil of a nose
I scent spring's essence—in the silver rays
I see some knight—a lady on his arm,
And think, "To saunter thus 'neath the moonshine,
I were fain to have my lady, too, beside!"
Thought soars to ecstasy . . . O sudden fall!
—The shadow of my profile on the wall!
LE BRET (*tenderly*). My friend! . . .
CYRANO. My friend, at times 'tis hard, 'tis bitter,
To feel my loneliness—my own ill-favor . . .
LE BRET (*taking his hand*). You weep?
CYRANO. No, never! Think, how vilely suited
Adown this nose a tear its passage tracing!
I never will, while of myself I'm master,
Let the divinity of tears—their beauty
Be wedded to such common ugly grossness!
Nothing more solemn than a tear—sublimer;
And I would not by weeping turn to laughter
The grave emotion that a tear engenders!
LE BRET. Never be sad! What's love?—a chance of Fortune!
CYRANO (*shaking his head*). Look I a Cæsar to woo Cleopatra?
A Tito to aspire to Berenice?
LE BRET. Your courage and your wit!—The little maid
Who offered you refreshment even now,
Her eyes did not abhor you—you saw well!
CYRANO (*impressed*). True!
LE BRET. Well, how then? . . . I saw Roxane herself
Was death-pale as she watched the duel.
CYRANO. Pale?
LE BRET. Her heart, her fancy, are already caught!
Put it to th' touch!

CYRANO. That she may mock my face?
That is the one thing on this earth I fear!
THE PORTER (*introducing some one to* CYRANO). Sir, some one asks for you . . .
CYRANO (*seeing the* DUENNA). God! her duenna!
THE DUENNA (*with a low bow*). I was bid ask you where a certain lady
Could see her valiant cousin—but in secret.
CYRANO (*overwhelmed*). See me?
THE DUENNA (*courtesying*). Ay, Sir! She has somewhat to tell.
CYRANO. Somewhat? . . .
THE DUENNA (*still courtesying*). Ay, private matters!
CYRANO (*staggering*). Ah, my God.
THE DUENNA. To-morrow, at the early blush of dawn,
We go to hear mass at St. Roch.
CYRANO (*leaning against* LE BRET). My God!
THE DUENNA. After—what place for a few minutes' speech?
CYRANO (*confused*). Where? Ah! . . . but . . . Ah, my God! . . .
THE DUENNA. Say!
CYRANO. I reflect! . . .
THE DUENNA. Where?
CYRANO. At—the pastry-house of Ragueneau.
THE DUENNA. Where lodges he?
CYRANO. The Rue—God!—St. Honoré!
THE DUENNA (*going*). Good. Be you there. At seven.
CYRANO. Without fail. [THE DUENNA *goes out.*
CYRANO (*falling into* LE BRET'S *arms*). A rendezvous . . . from her! . . .
LE BRET. You're sad no more!
CYRANO. Ah! let the world go burn! She knows I live!
LE BRET. Now you'll be calm, I hope?
CYRANO (*beside himself for joy*). Calm? I now calm?
I'll be frenetic, frantic,—raving mad!
Oh, for an army to attack!—a host!
I've ten hearts in my breast; a score of arms;
No dwarfs to cleave in twain! . . .
(*Wildly.*) No! Giants now!
[*For a few moments the shadows of the* ACTORS *have been moving on the stage, whispers are heard—the rehearsal is beginning. The* VIOLINISTS *are in their places.*
A VOICE FROM THE STAGE. Hollo there! Silence! We rehearse!
CYRANO (*laughing*). We go!
[*He moves away. By the big door enter* CUIGY, BRIS-

SAILLE, *and some* OFFICERS, *holding up* LIGNIERE, *who is drunk.*

CUIGY. Cyrano!

CYRANO. Well, what now?

CUIGY. A lusty thrush
They're bringing you!

CYRANO (*recognizing him*). Ligniere! . . . What has chanced?

CUIGY. He seeks you!

BRISSAILLE. He dare not go home!

CYRANO. Why not?

LIGNIERE (*in a husky voice, showing him a crumpled letter*).
This letter warns me . . . that a hundred men . . .
Revenge that threatens me . . . that song, you know——
At the Porte de Nesle. To get to my own house
I must pass there. . . . I dare not! . . . Give me leave
To sleep to-night beneath your roof! Allow . . .

CYRANO. A hundred men? You'll sleep in your own bed!

LIGNIERE (*frightened*). But——

CYRANO (*in a terrible voice, showing him the lighted lantern held by the* PORTER, *who is listening curiously*). Take the lantern.
(LIGNIERE *seizes it.*) Let us start! I swear
That I will make your bed to-night myself!
(*To the* OFFICERS.) Follow, some stay behind, as witnesses!

CUIGY. A hundred! . . .

CYRANO. Less, to-night—would be too few!

[*The* ACTORS *and* ACTRESSES, *in their costumes, have come down from the stage, and are listening.*

LE BRET. But why embroil yourself?

CYRANO. Le Bret who scolds!

LE BRET. That worthless drunkard!——

CYRANO (*slapping* LIGNIERE *on the shoulder*). Wherefore? For this cause;—
This wine-barrel, this cask of Burgundy,
Did, on a day, an action full of grace;
As he was leaving church, he saw his love
Take holy water—he, who is affeared
At water's taste, ran quickly to the stoup,
And drank it all, to the last drop! . . .

AN ACTRESS. Indeed,
That was a graceful thing!

CYRANO. Ay, was it not?

THE ACTRESS (*to the others*). But why a hundred men 'gainst one poor rhymer?

CYRANO. March!
(*To the* OFFICERS.) Gentlemen, when you shall see me charge
Bear me no succor, none, whate'er the odds!
ANOTHER ACTRESS (*jumping down from the stage*). Oh! I shall come and see!
CYRANO. Come, then!
ANOTHER (*jumping down—to an old* ACTOR). And you? . . .
CYRANO. Come all—the Doctor, Isabel, Leander,
Come, for you shall add, in a motley swarm,
The farce Italian to this Spanish drama!
ALL THE WOMEN (*dancing for joy*). Bravo!—a mantle, quick!—my hood!
JODELET. Come on!
CYRANO. Play us a march, gentlemen of the band!
[*The* VIOLINISTS *join the procession, which is forming. They take the footlights, and divide them for torches.*
Brave officers! next, women in costume,
And, twenty paces on——
(*He takes his place.*) I, all alone,
Beneath the plume that Glory lends, herself,
To deck my beaver—proud as Scipio! . . .
—You hear me?—I forbid you succor me!—
One, two, three! Porter, open wide the doors!
[*The* PORTER *opens the doors; a view of old Paris in the moonlight is seen.*
Ah! . . . Paris wrapped in night! half nebulous:
The moonlight streams o'er the blue-shadowed roofs;
A lovely frame for this wild battle-scene;
Beneath the vapor's floating scarves, the Seine
Trembles, mysterious, like a magic mirror,
And, shortly, you shall see what you shall see!
ALL. To the Porte de Nesle!
CYRANO (*standing on the threshold*). Ay, to the Porte de Nesle!
[*Turning to the* ACTRESS.
Did you not ask, young lady, for what cause
Against this rhymer fivescore men were sent?
[*He draws his sword; then, calmly.*
'Twas that they knew him for a friend of mine!
[*He goes out.* LIGNIERE *staggers first after him, then the* ACTRESSES *on the* OFFICERS' *arms—the* ACTORS. *The procession starts to the sound of the violins and in the faint light of the candles.*

ACT II

The Poet's Eating-House.

Ragueneau's *cook and pastry-shop. A large kitchen at the corner of the Rue St. Honoré and the Rue de l'Arbre Sec, which are seen in the background through the glass door, in the gray dawn.*

On the left, in the foreground, a counter, surmounted by a stand in forged iron, on which are hung geese, ducks, and white peacocks. In great china vases are tall bouquets of simple flowers, principally yellow sunflowers.

On the same side, farther back, an immense open fireplace, in front of which, between monster firedogs, on each of which hangs a little saucepan; the roasts are dripping into the pans.

On the right, foreground with door.

Farther back, staircase leading to a little room under the roof, the entrance of which is visible through the open shutter. In this room a table is laid. A small Flemish luster is alight. It is a place for eating and drinking. A wooden gallery, continuing the staircase, apparently leads to other similar little rooms.

In the middle of the shop an iron hoop is suspended from the ceiling by a string with which it can be drawn up and down, and big game is hung around it.

The ovens in the darkness under the stairs give forth a red glow. The copper pans shine. The spits are turning. Heaps of food formed into pyramids. Hams suspended. It is the busy hour of the morning. Bustle and hurry of scullions, fat cooks, and diminutive apprentices, their caps profusely decorated with cock's feathers and wings of guinea-fowl.

On metal and wicker plates they are bringing in piles of cakes and tarts.

Tables laden with rolls and dishes of food. Other tables surrounded with chairs are ready for the consumers.

A small table in a corner covered with papers, at which Ragueneau *is seated writing on the rising of the curtain.*

Ragueneau *is writing, with an inspired air, at a small table, and counting on his fingers.*

First Pastry-Cook (*bringing in an elaborate fancy dish*). Fruits in nougat!

Second Pastry-Cook (*bringing another dish*). Custard!

THIRD PASTRY-COOK (*bringing a roast, decorated with feathers*). Peacock!

FOURTH PASTRY-COOK (*bringing a batch of cakes on a slab*). Rissoles!

FIFTH PASTRY-COOK (*bringing a sort of pie-dish*). Beef jelly!

RAGUENEAU (*ceasing to write, and raising his head*). Aurora's silver rays begin to glint e'en now on the copper pans, and thou, O Ragueneau! must perforce stifle in thy breast the God of Song! Anon shall come the hour of the lute!—now 'tis the hour of the oven! (*He rises. To a* COOK.) You, make that sauce longer, 'tis too short!

THE COOK. How much too short?

RAGUENEAU. Three feet. (*He passes on farther.*)

THE COOK. What means he?

FIRST PASTRY-COOK (*showing a dish to* RAGUENEAU). The tart!

SECOND PASTRY-COOK. The pie!

RAGUENEAU (*before the fire*). My Muse, retire, lest thy bright eyes be reddened by the fagot's blaze! (*To a* COOK, *showing him some loaves.*) You have put the cleft o' th' loaves in the wrong place; know you not that the *cæsura* should be between the hemistiches? (*To another, showing him an unfinished pasty.*) To this palace of paste you must add the roof. . . . (*To a young* APPRENTICE, *who, seated on the ground, is spitting the fowls.*) And you, as you put on your lengthy spit the modest fowl and the superb turkey, my son, alternate them, as the old Malherbe loved well to alternate his long lines of verse with the short ones; thus shall your roasts, in strophes, turn before the flame!

ANOTHER APPRENTICE (*also coming up with a tray covered by a napkin*). Master, I bethought me erewhile of your tastes, and made this, which will please you, I hope. (*He uncovers the tray, and shows a large lyre made of pastry.*)

RAGUENEAU (*enchanted*). A lyre!

THE APPRENTICE. 'Tis of brioche pastry.

RAGUENEAU (*touched*). With conserved fruits.

THE APPRENTICE. The strings, see, are of sugar.

RAGUENEAU (*giving him a coin*). Go, drink my health! (*Seeing* LISE *enter.*) Hush! my wife. Bustle, pass on, and hide that money. (*To* LISE, *showing her the lyre, with a conscious look.*) Is it not beautiful?

LISE. 'Tis passing silly! (*She puts a pile of papers on the counter.*)

RAGUENEAU. Bags? Good. I thank you. (*He looks at them.*) Heavens! my cherished leaves! The poems of my friends! Torn, dismembered, to make bags for holding biscuits and

cakes! . . . Ah, 'tis the old tale again . . . Orpheus and the Bacchantes!

LISE (*dryly*). And am I not free to turn at last to some use the sole thing that your wretched scribblers of halting lines leave behind them by way of payment?

RAGUENEAU. Groveling ant! . . . Insult not the divine grasshoppers, the sweet singers!

LISE. Before you were the sworn comrade of all that crew, my friend, you did not call your wife ant and Bacchante!

RAGUENEAU. To turn fair verse to such a use!

LISE. 'Faith, 'tis all it's good for.

RAGUENEAU. Pray then, madam, to what use would you degrade prose?

[*Two* CHILDREN *have just trotted into the shop.*

RAGUENEAU. What would you, little ones?

FIRST CHILD. Three pies.

RAGUENEAU (*serving them*). See, hot and well browned.

SECOND CHILD. If it please you, Sir, will you wrap them up for us?

RAGUENEAU (*aside, distressed*). Alas! one of my bags! (*To the* CHILDREN.) What? must I wrap them up? (*He takes a bag, and just as he is about to put in the pies, he reads.*) "Ulysses thus, on leaving fair Penelope . . ." Not that one! (*He puts it aside, and takes another, and as he is about to put in the pies, he reads.*) "The gold-locked Phœbus . . ." Nay, nor that one! . . . (*Same play.*)

LISE (*impatiently*). What are you dallying for?

RAGUENEAU. Here! here! here! (*He chooses a third, resignedly.*) The sonnet to Phillis! . . . but 'tis hard to part with it!

LISE. By good luck he has made up his mind at last! (*Shrugging her shoulders.*) Nicodemus! (*She mounts on a chair, and begins to range plates on a dresser.*)

RAGUENEAU (*taking advantage of the moment she turns her back, calls back the* CHILDREN, *who are already at the door*). Hist! children! . . . Render me back the sonnet to Phillis, and you shall have six pies instead of three. (*The* CHILDREN *give him back the bag, seize the cakes quickly, and go out.* RAGUENEAU, *smoothing out the paper, begins to declaim.*) "Phillis! . . ." On that sweet name a smear of butter! "Phillis! . . ."

[CYRANO *enters hurriedly.*

CYRANO. What's o'clock?

RAGUENEAU (*bowing low*). Six o'clock.

CYRANO (*with emotion*). In one hour's time! (*He paces up and down the shop.*)

RAGUENEAU (*following him*). Bravo! I saw . . .

CYRANO. Well, what saw you, then?

RAGUENEAU. Your combat! . . .

CYRANO. Which?

RAGUENEAU. That in the Burgundy Hotel, 'faith!

CYRANO (*contemptuously*). Ah! . . . the duel!

RAGUENEAU (*admiringly*). Ay! the duel in verse! . . .

LISE. He can talk of naught else!

CYRANO. Well! Good! let be!

RAGUENEAU (*making passes with a spit that he catches up*). "At the *envoi's* end, I touch! . . At the *envoi's* end, I touch!" . . . 'Tis fine, fine! (*With increasing enthusiasm.*) "At the *envoi's* end——"

CYRANO. What hour is it now, Ragueneau?

RAGUENEAU (*stopping short in the act of thrusting to look at the clock*). Five minutes after six! . . . "I touch!" (*He straightens himself.*) . . . Oh! to write a ballade!

LISE (*to* CYRANO, *who, as he passes by the counter, has absently shaken hands with her*). What's wrong with your hand?

CYRANO. Naught; a slight cut.

RAGUENEAU. Have you been in some danger?

CYRANO. None in the world.

LISE (*shaking her finger at him*). Methinks you speak not the truth in saying that!

CYRANO. Did you see my nose quiver when I spoke? 'Faith, it must have been a monstrous lie that should move it! (*Changing his tone.*) I wait some one here. Leave us alone, and disturb us for naught an it were not for crack of doom!

RAGUENEAU. But 'tis impossible; my poets are coming . . .

LISE (*ironically*). Oh, ay, for their first meal o' the day!

CYRANO. Prythee, take them aside when I shall make you sign to do so . . . What's o'clock?

RAGUENEAU. Ten minutes after six.

CYRANO (*nervously seating himself at* RAGUENEAU'S *table, and drawing some paper toward him*). A pen! . . .

RAGUENEAU (*giving him the one from behind his ear*). Here—a swan's quill.

A MUSKETEER (*with fierce mustache, enters, and in a stentorian voice*). Good-day! (LISE *goes up to him quickly.*)

CYRANO (*turning round*). Who's that?

RAGUENEAU. 'Tis a friend of my wife—a terrible warrior—at least so says he himself.

CYRANO (*taking up the pen, and motioning* RAGUENEAU *away*). Hush! (*To himself.*) I will write, fold it, give it her, and fly! (*Throws down the pen.*) Coward! . . . But strike me dead if I dare to speak to her, . . . ay, even one single word! (*To* RAGUENEAU.) What time is it?

RAGUENEAU. A quarter after six! . . .

CYRANO (*striking his breast*). Ay—a single word of all those here! here! But writing, 'tis easier done. . . . (*He takes up the pen.*) Go to, I will write it, that love-letter! Oh! I have writ it and rewrit it in my own mind so oft that it lies there ready for pen and ink; and if I lay but my soul by my letter-sheet, 'tis naught to do but to copy from it. (*He writes. Through the glass of the door the silhouettes of their figures move uncertainly and hesitatingly.*)

[*The* POETS, *dressed in black, their stockings ungartered, and covered with mud.*

LISE (*entering, to* RAGUENEAU). Here they come, your mud-bespattered friends!

FIRST POET (*enter, to* RAGUENEAU). Brother in art! . . .

SECOND POET (*to* RAGUENEAU, *shaking his hands*). Dear brother!

THIRD POET. High soaring eagle among pastry-cooks! (*He sniffs.*) Marry! it seems good here in your eyrie!

FOURTH POET. 'Tis at Phœbus' own rays that thy roasts turn!

FIFTH POET. Apollo among master-cooks——

RAGUENEAU (*whom they surround and embrace*). Ah! how quick a man feels at his ease with them! . . .

FIRST POET. We were stayed by the mob; they are crowded all round the Porte de Nesle! . . .

SECOND POET. Eight bleeding brigand carcasses strew the pavements there—all slit open with sword-gashes!

CYRANO (*raising his head a minute*). Eight? . . . hold, methought seven. (*He goes on writing.*)

RAGUENEAU (*to* CYRANO). Know you who might be the hero of the fray?

CYRANO (*carelessly*). Not I.

LISE (*to the* MUSKETEER). And you? know you?

THE MUSKETEER (*twirling his mustache*). Maybe!

CYRANO (*writing a little way off:—he is heard murmuring a word from time to time*). "I love thee!"

FIRST POET. 'Twas one man, say they all, ay, swear to it, one man who, single-handed, put the whole band to the rout!

SECOND POET. 'Twas a strange sight!—pikes and cudgels strewed thick upon the ground.

CYRANO (*writing*). . . . "Thine eyes". . .

THIRD POET. And they were picking up hats all the way to the Quai d'Orfèvres!

FIRST POET. *Sapristi!* but he must have been a ferocious . . .

CYRANO (*same play*). . . . "Thy lips". . .

FIRST POET. 'Twas a parlous fearsome giant that was the author of such exploits!

CYRANO (*same play*). . . . "And when I see thee come, I faint for fear."

SECOND POET (*filching a cake*). What hast rhymed of late, Ragueneau?

CYRANO (*same play*). . . . "Who worships thee" . . . (*He stops, just as he is about to sign, and gets up, slipping the letter into his doublet.*) No need I sign, since I give it her myself.

RAGUENEAU (*to* SECOND POET). I have put a recipe into verse.

THIRD POET (*seating himself by a plate of cream-puffs*). Go to! Let us hear these verses!

FOURTH POET (*looking at a cake which he has taken*). Its cap is all a' one side! (*He takes one bite of the top.*)

FIRST POET. See how this gingerbread woos the famished rhymer with its almond eyes, and its eyebrows of angelica! (*He takes it.*)

SECOND POET. We listen.

THIRD POET (*squeezing a cream-puff gently*). How it laughs! Till its very cream runs over!

SECOND POET (*biting a bit off the great lyre of pastry*). This is the first time in my life that ever I drew any means of nourishing me from the lyre!

RAGUENEAU (*who has put himself ready for reciting, cleared his throat, settled his cap, struck an attitude*). A recipe in verse! . . .

SECOND POET (*to* FIRST, *nudging him*). You are breakfasting?

FIRST POET (*to* SECOND). And you dining, methinks.

RAGUENEAU. *How almond tartlets are made.*

Beat your eggs up, light and quick;
Froth them thick;
Mingle with them while you beat
Juice of lemon, essence fine;
Then combine
The best milk of almonds sweet.
Circle with a custard paste
The slim waist

Of your tartlet-molds; the top
With a skillful finger print,
Nick and dint,
Round their edge, then, drop by drop,
In its little dainty bed
Your cream shed:
In the oven place each mold:
Reappearing, softly browned,
The renowned
Almond tartlets you behold!

THE POETS (*with mouths crammed full*). Exquisite! Delicious!

A POET (*choking*). Homph! (*They go up, eating.*)

CYRANO (*who has been watching, goes toward* RAGUENEAU). Lulled by your voice, did you see how they were stuffing themselves?

RAGUENEAU (*in a low voice, smiling*). Oh, ay! I see well enough, but I never will seem to look, fearing to distress them; thus I gain a double pleasure when I recite to them my poems; for I leave those poor fellows who have not breakfasted free to eat, even while I gratify my own dearest foible, see you?

CYRANO (*clapping him on the shoulder*). Friend, I like you right well! . . . (RAGUENEAU *goes after his friends.* CYRANO *follows him with his eyes, then, rather sharply.*) Ho there! Lise! (LISE, *who is talking tenderly to the* MUSKETEER, *starts, and comes down toward* CYRANO.) So this fine captain is laying siege to you?

LISE (*offended*). One haughty glance of my eye can conquer any man that should dare venture aught 'gainst my virtue.

CYRANO. Pooh! Conquering eyes, methinks, are oft conquered eyes.

LISE (*choking with anger*). But——

CYRANO (*incisively*). I like Ragueneau well, and so—mark me, Dame Lise—I permit not that he be rendered a laughing-stock by any . . .

LISE. But . . .

CYRANO (*who has raised his voice so as to be heard by the gallant*). A word to the wise . . . (*He bows to the* MUSKETEER, *and goes to the doorway to watch, after looking at the clock.*)

LISE (*to the* MUSKETEER, *who has merely bowed in answer to* CYRANO'S *bow*). How now? Is this your courage? . . . Why turn you not a jest on his nose?

THE MUSKETEER. On his nose? . . . ay, ay, . . . his nose. (*He goes quickly farther away;* LISE *follows him.*)

CYRANO (*from the doorway, signing to* RAGUENEAU *to draw the* POETS *away*). Hist! . . .

RAGUENEAU (*showing them the door on the right*). We shall be more private there . . .

CYRANO (*impatiently*). Hist! Hist! . . .

RAGUENEAU (*drawing them farther*). To read poetry, 'tis better here . . .

FIRST POET (*despairingly, with his mouth full*). What! leave the cakes? . . .

SECOND POET. Never! Let's take them with us! (*They all follow* RAGUENEAU *in procession, after sweeping all the cakes off the trays.*)

CYRANO. Ah! if I see but the faint glimmer of hope, then I draw out my letter! (ROXANE, *masked, followed by the* DUENNA, *appears at the glass pane of the door. He opens quickly.*) Enter! . . . (*Walking up to the* DUENNA.) Two words with you, Duenna.

THE DUENNA. Four, Sir, an it like you.

CYRANO. Are you fond of sweet things?

THE DUENNA. Ay, I could eat myself sick on them!

CYRANO (*catching up some of the paper bags from the counter*). Good. See you these two sonnets of Monsieur Beuserade. . . .

THE DUENNA. Hey?

CYRANO. . . . Which I fill for you with cream cakes!

THE DUENNA (*changing her expression*). Ha!

CYRANO. What say you to the cake they call a little puff?

THE DUENNA. If made with cream, Sir, I love them passing well.

CYRANO. Here I plunge six for your eating into the bosom of a poem by Saint Amant! And in these verses of Chapelain I glide a lighter morsel. Stay, love you hot cakes?

THE DUENNA. Ay, to the core of my heart!

CYRANO (*filling her arms with the bags*). Pleasure me then; go eat them all in the street.

THE DUENNA. But . . .

CYRANO (*pushing her out*). And come not back till the very last crumb be eaten! (*He shuts the door, comes down toward* ROXANE, *and, uncovering, stands at a respectful distance from her.*)

Blessed be the moment when you condescend—
Remembering that humbly I exist—
To come to meet me, and to say . . . to tell? . . .

ROXANE (*who has unmasked*). To thank you first of all. That dandy count,
Whom you checkmated in brave sword-play

Last night, . . . he is the man whom a great lord,
Desirous of my favor . . .

CYRANO. Ha, De Guiche?

ROXANE (*casting down her eyes*). Sought to impose on me . . . for husband . . .

CYRANO. Ay! Husband!—dupe-husband! . . . Husband *à la mode.* (*Bowing.*) Then I fought, happy chance! sweet lady, not
For my ill favor—but your favors fair!

ROXANE. Confession next! . . . But, ere I make my shrift,
You must be once again that brother-friend
With whom I used to play by the lake-side! . . .

CYRANO. Ay, you would come each spring to Bergerac!

ROXANE. Mind you the reeds you cut to make your swords? . . .

CYRANO. While you wove corn-straw plaits for your dolls' hair!

ROXANE. Those were the days of games! . . .

CYRANO. And blackberries! . . .

ROXANE. In those days you did everything I bid! . . .

CYRANO. Roxane, in her short frock, was Madeleine . . .

ROXANE. Was I fair then?

CYRANO. You were not ill to see!

ROXANE. Ofttimes, with hands all bloody from a fall,
You'd run to me! Then—aping mother-ways—
I, in a voice would-be severe, would chide,—
(*She takes his hand.*) "What is this scratch, again, that I see here?"
(*She starts, surprised.*) Oh! 'tis too much! What's this?
(CYRANO *tries to draw away his hand.*) No, let me see!
At your age, fie! Where did you get that scratch?

CYRANO. I got it—playing at the Porte de Nesle.

ROXANE (*seating herself by the table, and dipping her handkerchief in a glass of water*). Give here!

CYRANO (*sitting by her*). So soft; so gay maternal-sweet!

ROXANE. And tell me, while I wipe away the blood,
How many 'gainst you?

CYRANO. Oh! a hundred—near.

ROXANE. Come, tell me!

CYRANO. No, let be. But you, come tell
The thing, just now, you dared not . . .

ROXANE (*keeping his hand.*) Now, I dare.
The scent of those old days emboldens me!
Yes, now I dare. Listen. I am in love.

CYRANO. Ah! . . .

ROXANE. But with one who knows not.

CYRANO. Ah! . . .
ROXANE. Not yet.
CYRANO. Ah! . . .
ROXANE. But who, if he knows not, soon shall learn.
CYRANO. Ah! . . .
ROXANE. A poor youth who all this time has loved
Timidly, from afar, and dares not speak . . .
CYRANO. Ah! . . .
ROXANE. Leave your hand; why, it is fever-hot!—
But I have seen love trembling on his lips.
CYRANO. Ah! . . .
ROXANE (*bandaging his hand with her handkerchief*). And to think of it! that he by chance—
Yes, cousin, he is of your regiment!
CYRANO. Ah! . . .
ROXANE (*laughing*). —Is cadet in your own company!
CYRANO. Ah! . . .
ROXANE. On his brow he bears the genius-stamp;
He is proud, noble, young, intrepid, fair . . .
CYRANO (*rising suddenly, very pale*). Fair!
ROXANE. Why, what ails you?
CYRANO. Nothing; 'tis . . .
(*He shows his hand, smiling.*) This scratch!
ROXANE. I love him; all is said. But you must know
I have only seen him at the Comedy . . .
CYRANO. How? You have never spoken?
ROXANE. Eyes can speak.
CYRANO. How know you then that he . . . ?
ROXANE. Oh! people talk
'Neath the limes in the Place Royale . . . Gossip's chat
Has let me know . . .
CYRANO. He is cadet?
ROXANE. In the Guards.
CYRANO. His name?
ROXANE. Baron Christian de Neuvillette.
CYRANO. How now! . . . He is not of the Guards!
ROXANE. To-day
He is to join your ranks, under Captain
Carbon de Castel-Jaloux.
CYRANO. Ah, how quick,
How quick the heart has flown! . . . But, my poor child . . .
THE DUENNA (*opening the door*). The cakes are eaten, Monsieur Bergerac!

CYRANO. Then read the verses printed on the bags!
(*She goes out.*) . . . My poor child, you who love but flowing words,
Bright wit,—what if he be a lout unskilled?
ROXANE. No, his bright locks, like D'Urfe's heroes . . .
CYRANO. Ah!
A well-curled pate, and witless tongue, perchance!
ROXANE. Ah no! I guess—I feel—his words are fair!
CYRANO. All words are fair that lurk 'neath fair mustache!
—Suppose he were a fool! . . .
ROXANE (*stamping her foot*). Then bury me!
CYRANO (*after a pause*). Was it to tell me this you brought me here?
I fail to see what use this serves, Madame.
ROXANE. Nay, but I felt a terror, here, in the heart,
On learning yesterday you were Gascons
All of your company . . .
CYRANO. And we provoke
All beardless sprigs that favor dares admit
'Midst us pure Gascons—(pure, Heaven save the mark!)
They told you that as well?
ROXANE. Ah! Think how I
Trembled for him!
CYRANO (*between his teeth*). Not causelessly!
ROXANE. But when
Last night I saw you,—brave, invincible,—
Punish that dandy, fearless hold your own
Against those brutes, I thought—I thought, if he
Whom all fear, all—if he would only . . .
CYRANO. Good.
I will befriend your little Baron.
ROXANE. Ah!
You'll promise me you will do this for me?
I've always held you as tender friend.
CYRANO. Ay, ay.
ROXANE. Then you will be his friend?
CYRANO. I swear!
ROXANE. And he shall fight no duels, promise!
CYRANO. None.
ROXANE. You are kind, cousin! Now I must be gone
(*She puts on her mask and veil quickly; then, absently.*) You have not told me of your last night's fray.

CYRANO AND ROXANE IN THE PASTRY SHOP—FROM WALTER HAMPDEN'S PRODUCTION OF "CYRANO DE BERGERAC"

Ah, but it must have been a hero-fight! . . .
—Bid him to write.
(*She sends him a kiss with her fingers.*) How good you are!

CYRANO. Ay, ay!

ROXANE. A hundred men against you! Now, farewell.—
We are great friends?

CYRANO. Ay, ay!

ROXANE. Oh, bid him write!
You'll tell me all one day— A hundred men!—
Ah, brave! . . . How brave!

CYRANO (*bowing to her*). I have fought better since.

[*She goes out.* CYRANO *stands motionless, with eyes on the ground. A silence. The door (R) opens.* RAGUENEAU *looks in.*

RAGUENEAU. Can we come in?

CYRANO (*without stirring*). Yes . . .

[RAGUENEAU *signs to his friends, and they come in. At the same time, by door at back, enters* CARBON DE CASTEL-JALOUX, *in Captain's uniform. He makes gestures of surprise on seeing* CYRANO.

CARBON. Here he is!

CYRANO (*raising his head*). Captain! . . .

CARBON (*delightedly*). Our hero! We heard all! Thirty or more
Of my cadets are there! . . .

CYRANO (*shrinking back*). But . . .

CARBON (*trying to draw him away*). Come with me!
They will not rest until they see you!

CYRANO. No!

CARBON. They're drinking opposite, at The Bear's Head.

CYRANO. I . . .

CARBON (*going to the door and calling across the street in a voice of thunder*). He won't come! The hero's in the sulks!

A VOICE (*outside*). Ah! *Sandious!* (*Tumult outside. Noise of boots and swords is heard approaching.*)

CARBON (*rubbing his hands*). They are running 'cross the street!

CADETS (*entering*). *Mille dious! Capdedious! Pocapdedious!*

RAGUENEAU (*drawing back startled*). Gentlemen, are you all from Gascony?

THE CADETS. All!

A CADET (*to* CYRANO). Bravo!

CYRANO. Baron!

ANOTHER (*shaking his hands*). *Vivat!*

CYRANO. Baron!

THIRD CADET. Come
I must embrace you!
CYRANO. Baron!
SEVERAL GASCONS. We'll embrace
Him, all in turn!
CYRANO (*not knowing whom to reply to*). Baron! . . . Baron! . . .
I beg . . .
RAGUENEAU. Are you all Barons, Sirs?
THE CADETS. Ay, every one!
RAGUENEAU. Is it true? . . .
FIRST CADET. Ay—why, you could build a tower
With nothing but our coronets, my friend!
LE BRET (*entering, and running up to* CYRANO). They're looking
for you! Here's a crazy mob
Led by the men who followed you last night . . .
CYRANO (*alarmed*). What! Have you told them where to find me?
LE BRET (*rubbing his hands*). Yes!
A BOURGEOIS (*entering, followed by a group of men*). Sir, all the
the Marais is a-coming here!
[*Outside the street has filled with people. Chaises à porteurs and carriages have drawn up.*
LE BRET (*in a low voice, smiling, to* CYRANO). And Roxane?
CYRANO (*quickly*). Hush!
THE CROWD (*calling outside*). Cyrano! . . .
[*A crowd rush into the shop, pushing one another. Acclamations.*
RAGUENEAU (*standing on a table*). Lo! my shop
Invaded! They break all! Magnificent!
PEOPLE (*crowding round* CYRANO). My friend . . . my friend . . .
CYRANO. Meseems that yesterday
I had not all these friends!
LE BRET (*delighted*). Success!
A YOUNG MARQUIS (*hurrying up with hands held out*). My friend,
Didst thou but know . . .
CYRANO. Thou! . . . Marry! . . thou! . . . Pray when
Did we herd swine together, you and I?
ANOTHER. I would present you, Sir, to some fair dame
Who in my carriage yonder . . .
CYRANO (*coldly*). Ah! and who
Will first present you, Sir, to me?
LE BRET (*astonished*). What's wrong?
CYRANO. Hush!
A MAN OF LETTERS (*with writing-board*). A few details? . . .

CYRANO. No.
LE BRET (*nudging his elbow*). 'Tis Theophrast,
Renaudet, . . . of the *Court Gazette!*
CYRANO. Who cares?
LE BRET. This paper—but it is of great importance! . . .
They say it will be an immense success!
A POET (*advancing*). Sir . . .
CYRANO. What, another!
THE POET. . . . Pray permit I make
A pentacrostic on your name.
SOME ONE (*also advancing*). Pray, Sir . . .
CYRANO. Enough! enough!
[*A movement in the crowd.* DE GUICHE *appears, escorted by officers.* CUIGY, BRISSAILLE, *the* OFFICERS *who went with* CYRANO *the night before.* CUIGY *comes rapidly up to* CYRANO.
CUIGY (*to* CYRANO). Here is Monsieur de Guiche?
(*A murmur—every one makes way.*) He comes from the Marshal of Gassion!
DE GUICHE (*bowing to* CYRANO.) . . . Who would express his admiration, Sir,
For your new exploit noised so loud abroad.
THE CROWD. Bravo!
CYRANO (*bowing*). The Marshal is a judge of valor.
DE GUICHE. He could not have believed the thing, unless
These gentlemen had sworn they witnessed it.
CUIGY. With our own eyes!
LE BRET (*aside to* CYRANO, *who has an absent air*). But . . . you . . .
CYRANO. Hush!
LE BRET. But . . . You suffer?
CYRANO (*starting*). Before this rabble?—I? . . .
(*He draws himself up, twirls his mustache, and throws back his shoulders.*) Wait! . . . You shall see!
DE GUICHE (*to whom* CUIGY *has spoken in a low voice*). In feats of arms, already your career
Abounded.—You serve with those crazy pates
Of Gascons?
CYRANO. Ay, with the Cadets.
A CADET (*in a terrible voice*). With us!
DE GUICHE (*looking at the* CADETS, *ranged behind* CYRANO.)
Ah! . . . All these gentlemen of haughty mien,
Are they the famous? . . .

CARBON. Cyrano!
CYRANO. Ay, Captain!
CARBON. Since all my company's assembled here,
Pray favor me,—present them to my lord!
CYRANO (*making two steps toward* DE GUICHE). My Lord de Guiche, permit that I present—
(*Pointing to the* CADETS.) The bold Cadets of Gascony,
Of Carbon of Castel-Jaloux!
Brawling and swaggering boastfully,
The bold Cadets of Gascony!
Spouting of Armory, Heraldry,
Their veins a-brimming with blood so blue,
The bold Cadets of Gascony,
Of Carbon of Castel-Jaloux:
Eagle-eye, and spindle-shanks,
Fierce mustache, and wolfish tooth!
Slash-the-rabble and scatter-their-ranks;
Eagle-eye and spindle-shanks,
With a flaming feather that gayly pranks,
Hiding the holes in their hats, forsooth!
Eagle-eye and spindle shanks,
Fierce mustache, and wolfish tooth!
"Pink-your-Doublet" and "Slit-your-Trunk"
Are their gentlest sobriquets;
With Fame and Glory their soul is drunk!
"Pink-your-Doublet" and "Slit-your-Trunk,"
In brawl and skirmish they show their spunk,
Give rendezvous in broil and fray;
"Pink-your-Doublet" and "Slit-your-Trunk"
Are their gentlest sobriquets!
What, ho! Cadets of Gascony!
All jealous lovers are sport for you!
O Woman! dear divinity!
What, ho! Cadets of Gascony!
Whom scowling husbands quake to see.
Blow, "tararara," and cry "Cuckoo."
What, ho! Cadets of Gascony!
Husbands and lovers are game for you!
DE GUICHE (*seated with haughty carelessness in an armchair brought quickly by* RAGUENEAU). A poet! 'Tis the fashion of the hour!
—Will you be mine?
CYRANO. No, Sir,—no man's!

DE GUICHE. Last night
Your fancy pleased my uncle Richelieu
I'll gladly say a word to him for you.
LE BRET (*overjoyed*). Great Heavens!
DE GUICHE. I imagine you have rhymed
Five acts, or so?
LE BRET (*in* CYRANO'S *ear*). Your play!—your "Agrippine!"
You'll see it staged at last!
DE GUICHE. Take them to him.
CYRANO (*beginning to be tempted and attracted*). In sooth,—I would . . .
DE GUICHE. He is a critic skilled:
He may correct a line or two, at most.
CYRANO (*whose face stiffens at once*). Impossible! My blood congeals to think
That other hand should change a comma's dot.
DE GUICHE. But when a verse approves itself to him
He pays it dear, good friend.
CYRANO. He pays less dear
Than I myself; when a verse pleases me
I pay myself, and sing it to myself!
DE GUICHE. You are proud.
CYRANO. Really? You have noticed that?
A CADET (*entering, with a string of old battered plumed beaver hats, full of holes, slung on his sword*). See, Cyrano,—this morning, on the quay
What strange bright-feathered game we caught! The hats
O' the fugitives . . .
CARBON. *"Spolia opima!"*
ALL (*laughing*). Ah! ah! ah!
CUIGY. He who laid that ambush, 'faith!
Must curse and swear!
BRISSAILLE. Who was it?
DE GUICHE. I myself. (*The laughter stops.*)
I charged them—work too dirty for my sword,
To punish and chastise a rhymster sot. (*Constrained silence.*)
THE CADET (*in a low voice, to* CYRANO, *showing him the beavers*). What do with them? They're full of grease!—a stew?
CYRANO (*taking the sword and, with a salute, dropping the hats at* DE GUICHE'S *feet*). Sir, pray be good enough to render them
Back to your friends.

DE GUICHE (*rising, sharply*). My chair there—quick!—I go!
(*To* CYRANO *passionately.*) As to you, sirrah! . . .
VOICE (*in the street*). Porters for my lord
De Guiche!
DE GUICHE (*who has controlled himself—smiling*). Have you read "Don Quixote"?
CYRANO. I have!
And doff my hat at th' mad knight-errant's name.
DE GUICHE. I counsel you to study . . .
A PORTER (*appearing at back*). My lord's chair!
DE GUICHE. . . . The windmill chapter!
CYRANO (*bowing*). Chapter the Thirteenth.
DE GUICHE. For when one tilts 'gainst windmills—it may chance . . .
CYRANO. Tilt I 'gainst those who change with every breeze?
DE GUICHE. . . . That windmill sails may sweep you with their arm
Down—in the mire! . . .
CYRANO. Or upward—to the stars!
[DE GUICHE *goes out, and mounts into his chair. The other lords go away whispering together.* LE BRET *goes to the door with them. The crowd disperses.*
CYRANO (*bowing mockingly to those who go out without daring to salute him*). Gentlemen . . . Gentlemen . . .
LE BRET (*coming back, despairingly*). Here's a fine coil!
CYRANO. Oh! scold away!
LE BRET. At least, you will agree
That to annihilate each chance of Fate
Exaggerates . . .
CYRANO. Yes!—I exaggerate!
LE BRET (*triumphantly*). Ah!
CYRANO. But for principle—example too,—
I think 'tis well thus to exaggerate.
LE BRET. Oh! lay aside that pride of musketeer,
Fortune and glory wait you! . . .
CYRANO. Ay, and then? . . .
Seek a protector, choose a patron out,
And like the crawling ivy round a tree
That licks the bark to gain the trunk's support,
Climb high by creeping ruse instead of force?
No, grammercy! What! I, like all the rest
Dedicate verse to bankers?—play buffoon
In cringing hope to see, at last, a smile
Not disapproving, on a patron's lips?

Grammercy, no! What! learn to swallow toads?
—With frame aweary climbing stairs?—a skin
Grown grimed and horny,—here, about the knees?
And, acrobat-like, teach my back to bend?—
No, grammercy! Or,—double-faced and sly—
Run with the hare, while hunting with the hounds;
And, oily-tongued, to win the oil of praise,
Flatter the great man to his very nose?
No, grammercy! Steal soft from lap to lap,
—A little great man in a circle small,
Or navigate, with madrigals for sails,
Blown gently windward by old ladies' sighs?
No, grammercy! Bribe kindly editors
To spread abroad my verses? Grammercy!
Or try to be elected as the pope
Of tavern-councils held by imbeciles?
No, grammercy! Toil to gain reputation
By one small sonnet, 'stead of making many?
No, grammercy! Or flatter sorry bunglers?
Be terrorized by every prating paper?
Say ceaselessly, "Oh, had I but the chance
Of a fair notice in the *Mercury!*"
Grammercy, no! Grow pale, fear, calculate?
Prefer to make a visit to a rhyme?
Seek introductions, draw petitions up?
No, grammercy! and no! and no again! But—sing?
Dream, laugh, go lightly, solitary, free,
With eyes that look straight forward—fearless voice!
To cock your beaver just the way you choose,—
For "yes" or "no" show fight, or turn a rhyme!
—To work without one thought of gain or fame,
To realize that journey to the moon!
Never to pen a line that has not sprung
Straight from the heart within. Embracing then
Modesty, say to oneself, "Good my friend,
Be thou content with flowers,—fruit,—nay, leaves,
But pluck them from no garden but thine own!"
And then, if glory come by chance your way,
To pay no tribute unto Cæsar, none,
But keep the merit all your own! In short,
Disdaining tendrils of the parasite,
To be content, if neither oak nor elm—
Not to mount high, perchance, but mount alone!

LE BRET. Alone, an if you will! But not with hand
'Gainst every man! How in the devil's name
Have you conceived this lunatic idea,
To make foes for yourself at every turn?

CYRANO. By dint of seeing you at every turn
Make friends,—and fawn upon your frequent friends
With mouth wide smiling, slit from ear to ear!
I pass, still unsaluted, joyfully,
And cry,—what, ho! another enemy?

LE BRET. Lunacy!

CYRANO. Well, what if it be my vice,
My pleasure to displease—to love men hate me!
Ah, friend of mine, believe me, I march better
'Neath the cross-fire of glances inimical!
How droll the stains one sees on fine-laced doublets,
From gall of envy, or the poltroon's drivel!
—The enervating friendship which enfolds you
Is like an open-laced Italian collar,
Floating around your neck in woman's fashion;
One is at ease thus,—but less proud the carriage!
The forehead, free from mainstay or coercion,
Bends here, there, everywhere. But I, embracing
Hatred, she lends,—forbidding, stiffly fluted,
The ruff's starched folds that hold the head so rigid;
Each enemy—another fold—a gopher,
Who adds constraint, and adds a ray of glory;
For Hatred, like the ruff worn by the Spanish,
Grips like a vice, but frames you like a halo!

LE BRET (*after a silence, taking his arm*). Speak proud aloud, and bitter!—In my ear
Whisper me simply this,—She loves thee not!

CYRANO (*vehemently*). Hush!

[CHRISTIAN *has just entered, and mingled with the* CADETS, *who do not speak to him; he has seated himself at a table, where* LISE *serves him.*

A CADET (*seated at a table, glass in hand*). Cyrano!
(CYRANO *turns round.*) The story!

CYRANO. In its time! (*He goes up on* LE BRET'S *arm. They talk in low voices.*)

THE CADET (*rising and coming down*). The story of the fray!
'Twill lesson well. (*He stops before the table where* CHRISTIAN *is seated.*)
This timid young apprentice?

CHRISTIAN (*raising his head*). 'Prentice! Who?
ANOTHER CADET. This sickly Northern greenhorn!
CHRISTIAN. Sickly!
FIRST CADET (*mockingly*). Hark!
Monsieur de Neuvillette, this in your ear:
There's somewhat here, one no more dares to name,
Than to say "rope" to one whose sire was hanged!
CHRISTIAN. What may that be?
ANOTHER CADET (*in a terrible voice*). See here!
(*He puts his finger three times, mysteriously, on his nose.*)
Do you understand?
CHRISTIAN. Oh! 'tis the . . .
ANOTHER. Hush! oh, never breathe that word,
Unless you'd reckon with him yonder! (*He points to* CYRANO, *who is talking to* LE BRET.)
ANOTHER (*who has meanwhile come up noiselessly to sit on the table—whispering behind him*). Hark!
He put two snuffling men to death, in rage,
For the sole reason they spoke through their nose!
ANOTHER (*in a hollow voice, darting on all-fours from under the table, where he had crept*). And if you would not perish in flower o' youth,
—Oh, mention not the fatal cartilage!
ANOTHER (*clapping him on the shoulder*). A word? A gesture!
For the indiscreet
His handkerchief may prove his winding-sheet!
[*Silence. All, with crossed arms, look at* CHRISTIAN. *He rises and goes over to* CARBON DE CASTEL-JALOUX, *who is talking to an* OFFICER, *and feigns to see nothing.*
CHRISTIAN. Captain!
CARBON (*turning and looking at him from head to foot*). Sir!
CHRISTIAN. Pray, what skills it best to do
To Southerners who swagger? . . .
CARBON. Give them proof
That one may be a Northerner, yet brave! (*He turns his back on him.*)
CHRISTIAN. I thank you.
FIRST CADET (*to* CYRANO). Now the tale!
ALL. The tale!
CYRANO (*coming toward them*). The tale? . . .
[*All bring their stools up, and group round him, listening eagerly.* CHRISTIAN *is astride a chair.*
Well! I went all alone to meet the band.

The moon was shining, clock-like, full i' th' sky,
When, suddenly, some careful clockwright passed
A cloud of cotton-wool across the case
That held this silver watch. And, presto! heigh!
The night was inky black, and all the quays
Were hidden in the murky dark. Gadsooks!
One could see nothing further . . .

CHRISTIAN. Than one's nose!

[*Silence. All slowly rise, looking in terror at* CYRANO, *who has stopped—dumfounded. Pause.*

CYRANO. Who on God's earth is that?

A CADET (*whispering*). It is a man
Who joined to-day.

CYRANO (*making a step toward* CHRISTIAN). To-day?

CARBON (*in a low voice*). Yes . . . his name is
The Baron de Neuvil . . .

CYRANO (*checking himself*). Good! it is well . . .
(*He turns pale, flushes, makes as if to fall on* CHRISTIAN.)
I . . .
(*He controls himself.*) What said I? . . .
(*With a burst of rage.*) *Mordious!* . . .
(*Then continues calmly.*) That it was dark.

[*Astonishment. The* CADETS *reseat themselves, staring at him.*

On I went, thinking, "For a knavish cause
I may provoke some great man, some great prince,
Who certainly could break" . . .

CHRISTIAN. My nose! . . .

[*Every one starts up.* CHRISTIAN *balances on his chair.*

CYRANO (*in a choked voice*). . . . "My teeth!
Who would break my teeth, and I, imprudent-like,
Was poking . . ."

CHRISTIAN. My nose! . . .

CYRANO. "My finger, . . . in the crack
Between the tree and bark! He may prove strong
And rap me . . ."

CHRISTIAN. Over the nose . . .

CYRANO (*wiping his forehead*). . . . "O' th' knuckles! Ay,"
But I cried, "Forward, Gascon! Duty calls!
On, Cyrano!" And thus I ventured on . . .
When, from the shadow, came . . .

CHRISTIAN. A crack o' th' nose.

CYRANO. I parry it—find myself . . .

CHRISTIAN. Nose to nose . . .
CYRANO (*bounding on to him*). Heaven and earth!
[*All the Gascons leap up to see, but when he is close to* CHRISTIAN *he controls himself and continues.*
. . . With a hundred brawling sots,
Who stank . . .
CHRISTIAN. A noseful . . .
CYRANO (*white, but smiling*). Onions, brandy-cups!
I leapt out, head well down. . . .
CHRISTIAN. Nosing the wind!
CYRANO. I charge!—gore two, impale one—run him through,
One aims at me—Paf! and I parry . . .
CHRISTIAN. Pif!
CYRANO (*bursting out*). Great God! Out! all of you! (*The* CADETS *rush to the doors.*)
FIRST CADET. The tiger wakes!
CYRANO. Every man, out! Leave me alone with him!
SECOND CADET. We shall find him minced fine, minced into hash
In a big pasty!
RAGUENEAU. I am turning pale,
And curl up, like a napkin, limp and white!
CARBON. Let us be gone.
ANOTHER. He will not leave a crumb!
ANOTHER. I die of fright to think what will pass here!
ANOTHER (*shutting door R.*). Something too horrible!
[*All have gone out by different doors, some by the staircase.* CYRANO *and* CHRISTIAN *are face to face, looking at each other for a moment.*
CYRANO. Embrace me now!
CHRISTIAN. Sir . . .
CYRANO. You are brave.
CHRISTIAN. Oh! but . . .
CYRANO. Nay, I insist.
CHRISTIAN. Pray tell me . . .
CYRANO. Come, embrace! I am her brother.
CHRISTIAN. Whose brother?
CYRANO. Hers, i' faith! Roxane's!
CHRISTIAN (*rushing up to him*). O heavens!
Her brother . . .?
CYRANO. Cousin-brother! . . . the same thing!
CHRISTIAN. And she has told you . . .?
CYRANO. All!
CHRISTIAN. She loves me? say!

CYRANO. Maybe!
CHRISTIAN (*taking his hands*). How glad I am to meet you, Sir!
CYRANO. That may be called a sudden sentiment!
CHRISTIAN. I ask your pardon . . .
CYRANO (*looking at him, with his hand on his shoulder*). True, he's fair, the villain!
CHRISTIAN. Ah, Sir! If you but knew my admiration! . . .
CYRANO. But all those noses? . . .
CHRISTIAN. Oh! I take them back!
CYRANO. Roxane expects a letter.
CHRISTIAN. Woe the day!
CYRANO. How?
CHRISTIAN. I am lost if I but ope my lips!
CYRANO. Why so?
CHRISTIAN. I am a fool—could die for shame!
CYRANO. None is a fool who knows himself a fool.
And you did not attack me like a fool.
CHRISTIAN. Bah! One finds battle-cry to lead th' assault!
I have a certain military wit,
But, before women, can but hold my tongue.
Their eyes! True, when I pass, their eyes are kind . . .
CYRANO. And, when you stay, their hearts, methinks, are kinder?
CHRISTIAN. No! for I am one of those men—tongue-tied,
I know it—who can never tell their love.
CYRANO. And I, meseems, had Nature been more kind,
More careful, when she fashioned me,—had been
One of those men who well could speak their love!
CHRISTIAN. Oh, to express one's thoughts with facile grace! . . .
CYRANO. . . . To be a musketeer, with handsome face!
CHRISTIAN. Roxane is *précieuse*. I'm sure to prove
A disappointment to her!
CYRANO (*looking at him*). Had I but
Such an interpreter to speak my soul!
CHRISTIAN (*with despair*). Eloquence! Where to find it?
CYRANO (*abruptly*). That I lend,
If you lend me your handsome victor-charms;
Blended, we make a hero of romance!
CHRISTIAN. How so?
CYRANO. Think you you can repeat what things
I daily teach your tongue? . . .
CHRISTIAN. What do you mean? . . .
CYRANO. Roxane shall never have a disillusion!
Say, wilt thou that we woo her, double-handed?

Wilt thou that we two woo her, both together?
Feel'st thou, passing from my leather doublet,
Through thy laced doublet, all my soul inspiring?

CHRISTIAN. But, Cyrano! . . .

CYRANO. Will you, I say?

CHRISTIAN. I fear!

CYRANO. Since, by yourself, you fear to chill her heart,
Will you—to kindle all her heart to flame—
Wed into one my phrases and your lips?

CHRISTIAN. Your eyes flash!

CYRANO. Will you?

CHRISTIAN. Will it please you so?
—Give you such pleasure?

CYRANO (*madly*). It! . . .
(*Then calmly, business-like.*) It would amuse me!
It is an enterprise to tempt a poet.
Will you complete me, and let me complete you?
You march victorious,—I go in your shadow;
Let me be wit for you, be you my beauty!

CHRISTIAN. The letter, that she waits for even now!
I never can . . .

CYRANO (*taking out the letter he had written*). See! Here it is—
your letter!

CHRISTIAN. What?

CYRANO. Take it! Look, it wants but the address.

CHRISTIAN. But I . . .

CYRANO. Fear nothing. Send it. It will suit.

CHRISTIAN. But have you . . . ?

CYRANO. Oh! we have our pockets full,
We poets, of love-letters, writ to Chloes,
Daphnes—creations of our noddle-heads.
Our lady-loves,—phantasms of our brains,
—Dream-fancies blown into soap-bubbles! Come!
Take it, and change feigned love-words into true;
I breathed my sighs and moans haphazard-wise;
Call all these wandering love-birds home to nest.
You'll see that I was in these lettered lines,
—Eloquent all the more, the less sincere!
—Take it, and make an end!

CHRISTIAN. Were it not well
To change some words? Written haphazard-wise,
Will it fit Roxane?

CYRANO. 'Twill fit like a glove!

CHRISTIAN. But . . .

CYRANO. Ah, credulity of love! Roxane
Will think each word inspired by herself!

CHRISTIAN. My friend! (*He throws himself into* CYRANO'S *arms. They remain thus.*)

A CADET (*half opening the door*). Naught here! . . . The silence of the grave!
I dare not look . . .
(*He puts his head in.*) Why? . . .

ALL THE CADETS (*entering, and seeing* CYRANO *and* CHRISTIAN *embracing*). Oh! . . .

A CADET. This passes all! (*Consternation.*)

THE MUSKETEER (*mockingly*). Ho, ho! . . .

CARBON. Our demon has become a saint?
Struck on one nostril—lo! he turns the other!

MUSKETEER. Then we may speak about his nose, henceforth! . . .
(*Calling to* LISE, *boastfully.*) —Ah, Lise, see here!
(*Sniffing ostentatiously.*) O heavens! . . what a stink! . . .
(*Going up to* CYRANO.) You, sir, without a doubt have sniffed it up!
—What is the smell I notice here?

CYRANO (*cuffing his head*). Clove-heads.

[*General delight. The* CADETS *have found the old* CYRANO *again! They turn somersaults.*

ACT III

ROXANE'S KISS.

A small square in the old Marais. Old houses. A perspective of little streets. On the right ROXANE'S *house and the wall of her garden overhung with thick foliage. Window and balcony over the door. A bench in front.*

From the bench and the stones jutting out of the wall it is easy to climb to the balcony. In front is an old house in the same style of brick and stone. The knocker of this door is bandaged with linen like a sore thumb.

At the rising of the curtain the DUENNA *is seated on the bench.*

The window on ROXANE'S *balcony is wide open.*

RAGUENEAU *is standing near the door in a sort of livery. He has just finished relating something to the* DUENNA, *and is wiping his eyes.*

RAGUENEAU. And then, off she went, with a musketeer! Deserted and ruined too, I would make an end of all, and so hanged myself. My last breath was drawn:—then in comes Monsieur de Bergerac! He cuts me down, and begs his cousin to take me for her steward.

THE DUENNA. Well, but how came it about that you were thus ruined?

RAGUENEAU. Oh! Lise loved the warriors, and I loved the poets! What cakes there were that Apollo chanced to leave were quickly snapped up by Mars. Thus ruin was not long a-coming.

THE DUENNA (*rising, and calling up to the open window*). Roxane, are you ready? They wait for us!

ROXANE'S VOICE (*from the window*). I will but put me on a cloak!

THE DUENNA (*to* RAGUENEAU, *showing him the door opposite*). They wait us there opposite, at Clomire's house. She receives them all there to-day—the *précieuses,* the poets; they read a discourse on the Tender Passion.

RAGUENEAU. The Tender Passion?

THE DUENNA (*in a mincing voice*). Ay, indeed! (*Calling up to the window.*) Roxane, an you come not down quickly, we shall miss the discourse on the Tender Passion!

ROXANE'S VOICE. I come! I come! (*A sound of stringed instruments approaching.*)

CYRANO'S VOICE (*behind the scenes, singing*). La, la, la, la!

THE DUENNA (*surprised*). They serenade us?

CYRANO (*followed by two* PAGES *with arch-lutes*). I tell you they are demi-semi-quavers, demi-semi-fool!

FIRST PAGE (*ironically*). You know then, Sir, to distinguish between semi-quavers and demi-semi-quavers?

CYRANO. Is not every disciple of Gassendi a musician?

THE PAGE (*playing and singing*). La, la!

CYRANO (*snatching the lute from him, and going on with the phrase*). In proof of which, I can continue! La, la, la, la!

ROXANE (*appearing on the balcony*). What? 'Tis you?

CYRANO (*going on with the air, and singing to it*). 'Tis I, who come to serenade your lilies, and pay my *devoir* to your ro—o—oses!

ROXANE. I am coming down! (*She leaves the balcony.*)

THE DUENNA (*pointing to the* PAGES). How come these two virtuosi here?

CYRANO. 'Tis for a wager I won of D'Assoucy. We were disputing a nice point in grammar; contradictions raged hotly—" 'Tis so!" "Nay, 'tis so!" when suddenly he shows me these two

long-shanks, whom he takes about with him as an escort, and who are skillful in scratching lute-strings with their skinny claws! "I will wager you a day's music," says he!—And lost it! Thus, see you, till Phœbus' chariot starts once again, these lute-twangers are at my heels, seeing all I do, hearing all I say, and accompanying all with melody. 'Twas pleasant at the first, but i' faith, I begin to weary of it already! (*To the* MUSICIANS.) Ho there! go serenade Montfleury for me! Play a dance to him! (*The* PAGES *go toward the door. To the* DUENNA.) I have come, as is my wont, nightly, to ask Roxane whether . . . (*To the* PAGES, *who are going out.*) Play a long time,—and play out of tune! (*To the* DUENNA.) . . . Whether her soul's elected is ever the same, ever faultless!

ROXANE (*coming out of the house*). Ah! How handsome he is, how brilliant a wit! And—how well I love him!

CYRANO (*smiling*). Christian has so brilliant a wit?

ROXANE. Brighter than even your own, cousin!

CYRANO. Be it so, with all my heart!

ROXANE. Ah! methinks 'twere impossible that there could breathe a man on this earth skilled to say as sweetly as he all the pretty nothings that mean so much—that mean all! At times his mind seems far away, the Muse says naught—and then, presto! he speaks—bewitchingly! enchantingly!

CYRANO (*incredulously*). No, no!

ROXANE. Fie! That is ill said! But lo! men are ever thus! Because he is fair to see, you would have it that he must be dull of speech.

CYRANO. He hath an eloquent tongue in telling his love?

ROXANE. In telling his love? why, 'tis not simple telling, 'tis dissertation, 'tis analysis!

CYRANO. How is he with the pen?

ROXANE. Still better! Listen,—here:— (*Reciting.*)

"The more of my poor heart you take
The larger grows my heart!"

(*Triumphantly to* CYRANO.) How like you those lines?

CYRANO. Pooh!

ROXANE. And thus it goes on . . .

"And, since some target I must show
For Cupid's cruel dart,
Oh, if mine own you deign to keep,
Then give me your sweet heart!"

CYRANO. Lord! first he has too much, then anon not enough! How much heart does the fellow want?

ROXANE. You would vex a saint! . . . But 'tis your jealousy.

CYRANO (*starting*). What mean you?

ROXANE. Ay, your poet's jealousy! Hark now, if this again be not tender-sweet?—

"My heart to yours sends but one cry:
If kisses fast could flee
By letter, then with your sweet lips
My letters read should be!
If kisses could be writ with ink,
If kisses fast could flee!"

CYRANO (*smiling approvingly in spite of himself*). Ha! those last lines are,—hm! . . . hm! . . . (*Correcting himself—contemptuously.*)—They are paltry enough!

ROXANE. And this . . .

CYRANO (*enchanted*). Then you have his letters by heart?

ROXANE. Every one of them!

CYRANO. By all oaths that can be sworn,—'tis flattering!

ROXANE. They are the lines of a master!

CYRANO (*modestly*). Come, nay . . . a master? . . .

ROXANE. Ay, I say it—a master!

CYRANO. Good—be it so.

THE DUENNA (*coming down quickly*). Here comes Monsieur de Guiche! (*To* CYRANO, *pushing him toward the house.*) In with you! 'twere best he see you not; it might perchance put him on the scent . . .

ROXANE (*to* CYRANO). Ay, of my own dear secret! He loves me, and is powerful, and, if he knew, then all were lost! Marry! he could well deal a deathblow to my love!

CYRANO (*entering the house*). Good! good! (DE GUICHE *appears.*)

ROXANE (*courtesying to* DE GUICHE). I was going out.

DE GUICHE. I come to take my leave.

ROXANE. Whither go you?

DE GUICHE. To the war.

ROXANE. Ah!

DE GUICHE. Ay, to-night.

ROXANE. Oh!

DE GUICHE. I am ordered away. We are to besiege Arras.

ROXANE. Ah—to besiege? . . .

DE GUICHE. Ay. My going moves you not, meseems.

ROXANE. Nay . . .

DE GUICHE. I am grieved to the core of the heart. Shall I again behold you? . . . When? I know not. Heard you that I am named commander? . . .

ROXANE (*indifferently*). Bravo!

DE GUICHE. Of the Guards regiment.

ROXANE (*startled*). What! the Guards?

DE GUICHE. Ay, where serves your cousin, the swaggering boaster. I will find a way to revenge myself on him at Arras.

ROXANE (*choking*). What mean you? The Guards go to Arras?

DE GUICHE (*laughing*). Bethink you, is it not my own regiment?

ROXANE (*falling seated on the bench—aside*). Christian!

DE GUICHE. What ails you?

ROXANE (*moved deeply*). Oh—I am in despair! The man one loves!—at the war!

DE GUICHE (*surprised and delighted*). You say such sweet words to me! 'Tis the first time!—and just when I must quit you!

ROXANE (*collected, and fanning herself*). Thus,—you would fain revenge your grudge against my cousin?

DE GUICHE. My fair lady is on his side?

ROXANE. Nay,—against him!

DE GUICHE. Do you see him often?

ROXANE. But very rarely.

DE GUICHE. He is ever to be met now in company with one of the cadets, . . . one New—villen—viller——

ROXANE. Of high stature?

DE GUICHE. Fair-haired!

ROXANE. Ay, a red-headed fellow!

DE GUICHE. Handsome! . . .

ROXANE. Tut!

DE GUICHE. But dull-witted.

ROXANE. One would think so, to look at him! (*Changing her tone.*) How mean you to play your revenge on Cyrano? Perchance you think to put him i' the thick of the shots? Nay, believe me, that were a poor vengeance—he would love such a post better than aught else! I know the way to wound his pride far more keenly!

DE GUICHE. What then? tell . . .

ROXANE. If, when the regiment march to Arras, he were left here with his beloved boon companions, the Cadets, to sit with crossed arms so long as the war lasted! There is your method, would you enrage a man of his kind; cheat him of his chance of mortal danger, and you punish him right fiercely.

DE GUICHE (*coming nearer*). O woman! woman! Who but a woman had e'er devised so subtle a trick?

ROXANE. See you not how he will eat out his heart, while his

friends gnaw their thick fists for that they are deprived of the battle? So are you best avenged.

DE GUICHE. You love me, then, a little? (*She smiles.*) I would fain—seeing you thus espouse my cause, Roxane—believe it a proof of love!

ROXANE. 'Tis a proof of love!

DE GUICHE (*showing some sealed papers*). Here are the marching orders; they will be sent instantly to each company—except—(*He detaches one.*) —This one! 'Tis that of the Cadets. (*He puts it in his pocket.*) This I keep. (*Laughing.*) Ha! ha! ha! Cyrano! His love of battle! . . . So you can play tricks on people? . . . you, of all ladies!

ROXANE. Sometimes!

DE GUICHE (*coming close to her*). Oh! how I love you!—to distraction! Listen! To-night—true, I ought to start—but—how leave you now that I feel your heart is touched! Hard by, in the Rue d'Orléans, is a convent founded by Father Athanasius, the syndic of the Capuchins. True that no layman may enter—but—I can settle that with the good Fathers! Their habit sleeves are wide enough to hide me in. 'Tis they who serve Richelieu's private chapel: and from respect to the uncle, fear the nephew. All will deem me gone. I will come to you, masked. Give me leave to wait till to-morrow, sweet Lady Fanciful!

ROXANE. But, if this be rumored, your glory . . .

DE GUICHE. Bah!

ROXANE. But the siege—Arras . . .

DE GUICHE. 'Twill take its chance. Grant but permission.

ROXANE. No!

DE GUICHE. Give me leave!

ROXANE (*tenderly*). It were my duty to forbid you!

DE GUICHE. Ah!

ROXANE. You must go! (*Aside.*) Christian stays here. (*Aloud.*) I would have you heroic—Antoine!

DE GUICHE. O heavenly word! You love, then, him? . . .

ROXANE. . . . For whom I trembled.

DE GUICHE (*in an ecstasy*). Ah! I go then! (*He kisses her hand.*) Are you content?

ROXANE. Yes, my friend! (*He goes out.*)

THE DUENNA (*making behind his back a mocking courtesy*). Yes, my friend!

ROXANE (*to the* DUENNA). Not a word of what I have done. Cyrano would never pardon me for stealing his fighting from

him! (*She calls toward the house.*) Cousin! We are going to Clomire's house. (*She points to the door opposite.*) Alcandre and Lysimon are to discourse!

THE DUENNA (*putting her little finger in her ear*). Yes! But my little finger tells me we shall miss them.

CYRANO. 'Twere a pity to miss such apes! (*They have come to* CLOMIRE'S *door.*)

THE DUENNA. Oh, see! The knocker is muffled up! (*Speaking to the knocker.*) So they have gagged that metal tongue of yours, little noisy one, lest it should disturb the fine orators! (*She lifts it carefully and knocks with precaution.*)

ROXANE (*seeing that the door opens*). Let us enter! (*On the threshold, to* CYRANO.) If Christian comes, as I feel sure he will, bid him wait for me!

CYRANO (*quickly, as she is going in.*) Listen! (*She turns.*) What mean you to question him on, as is your wont, to-night?

ROXANE. Oh——

CYRANO (*eagerly*). Well, say.

ROXANE. But you will be mute?

CYRANO. Mute as a fish.

ROXANE. I shall not question him at all, but say: Give rein to your fancy! Prepare not your speeches,—but speak the thoughts as they come! Speak to me of love, and speak splendidly!

CYRANO (*smiling*). Very good!

ROXANE. But secret! . . .

CYRANO. Secret.

ROXANE. Not a word! (*She enters and shuts the door.*)

CYRANO (*when the door is shut, bowing to her*). A thousand thanks! (*The door opens again, and* ROXANE *puts her head out.*)

ROXANE. Lest he prepare himself!

CYRANO. The devil!—no, no!

BOTH TOGETHER. Secret. (*The door shuts.*)

CYRANO (*calling*). Christian!

I know all that is needful. Here's occasion
For you to deck yourself with glory. Come,
Lose no time; put away those sulky looks,
Come to your house with me, I'll teach you . . .

CHRISTIAN. No!

CYRANO. Why?

CHRISTIAN. I will wait for Roxane here.

CYRANO. How? crazy?

Come quick with me and learn . . .

CHRISTIAN. No, no! I say.
I am aweary of these borrowed letters,
—Borrowed love-makings! Thus to act a part,
And tremble all the time!—'Twas well enough
At the beginning!—Now I know she loves!
I fear no longer!—I will speak myself.
CYRANO. Mercy!
CHRISTIAN. And how know you I cannot speak?—
I am not such a fool when all is said!
I've by your lessons profited. You'll see
I shall know how to speak alone! The devil!
I know at least to clasp her in my arms!
(*Seeing* ROXANE *come out from* CLOMIRE'S *house.*)
—It is she! Cyrano, no!—Leave me not!
CYRANO (*bowing*). Speak for yourself, my friend, and take your chance. (*He disappears behind the garden wall.*)
ROXANE (*coming out of* CLOMIRE'S *house, with a company of friends, whom she leaves. Bows and good-byes*). Barthenoide!—Alcandre!—Gremione!——
THE DUENNA (*bitterly disappointed*). We've missed the speech upon the Tender Passion! (*Goes into* ROXANE'S *house.*)
ROXANE (*still bowing*). Urimidonte—adieu!
(*All bow to* ROXANE *and to each other, and then separate, going up different streets.* ROXANE *suddenly seeing* CHRISTAIN.) You!
(*She goes to him.*) Evening falls.
Let's sit. Speak on. I listen.
CHRISTIAN (*sits by her on the bench. A silence*). Oh! I love you!
ROXANE (*shutting her eyes*). Ay, speak to me of love.
CHRISTIAN. I love thee!
ROXANE. That's
The theme! But vary it.
CHRISTIAN. I . . .
ROXANE. Vary it!
CHRISTIAN. I love you so!
ROXANE. Oh! without doubt!—and then? . . .
CHRISTIAN. And then—I should be—oh!—so glad—so glad
If you would love me!—Roxane, tell me so!
ROXANE (*with a little grimace*). I hoped for cream,—you give me gruel! Say
How love possesses you?
CHRISTIAN. Oh utterly!
ROXANE. Come, come! . . . unknot those tangled sentiments!

CHRISTIAN. Your throat I'd kiss it!
ROXANE. Christian!
CHRISTIAN. I love thee!
ROXANE (*half-rising*). Again!
CHRISTIAN (*eagerly, detaining her*). No, no! I love thee not!
ROXANE (*reseating herself*). 'Tis well!
CHRISTIAN. But I adore thee!
ROXANE (*rising, and going further off*). Oh!
CHRISTIAN. I am grown stupid!
ROXANE (*dryly*). And that displeases me, almost as much
As 'twould displease me if you grew ill-favored.
CHRISTIAN. But . . .
ROXANE. Rally your poor eloquence that's flown!
CHRISTIAN. I . . .
ROXANE. Yes, you love me, that I know. Adieu. (*She goes toward her house.*)
CHRISTIAN. Oh, go not yet! I'd tell you——
ROXANE (*opening the door*). You adore me?
I've heard it very oft. No!—Go away!
CHRISTIAN. But I would fain . . . (*She shuts the door in his face.*)
CYRANO (*who has re-entered unseen*). I' faith! It is successful!
CHRISTIAN. Come to my aid!
CYRANO. Not I!
CHRISTIAN. But I shall die,
Unless at once I win back her fair favor.
CYRANO. And how can I, at once, i' th' devil's name,
Lesson you in . . .
CHRISTIAN (*seizing his arm*). Oh, she is there! (*The window of the balcony is now lighted up.*)
CYRANO (*moved*). Her window!
CHRISTIAN. Oh! I shall die!
CYRANO. Speak lower!
CHRISTIAN (*in a whisper*). I shall die!
CYRANO. The night is dark . . .
CHRISTIAN. Well!
CYRANO. All can be repaired.
Although you merit not. Stand there, poor wretch!
Fronting the balcony! I'll go beneath
And prompt your words to you . . .
CHRISTIAN. But . . .
CYRANO. Hold your tongue!
THE PAGES (*reappearing at back—to* CYRANO). Ho!
CYRANO. Hush! (*He signs to them to speak softly.*)

FIRST PAGE (*in a low voice*). We've played the serenade you bade
To Montfleury!
CYRANO (*quickly, in a low voice*). Go! lurk in ambush there,
One at this street corner, and one at that;
And if a passer-by should here intrude,
Play you a tune!
SECOND PAGE. What tune, Sir Gassendist?
CYRANO. Gay, if a woman comes,—for a man, sad!
(*The* PAGES *disappear, one at each street corner. To* CHRISTIAN.) Call her!
CHRISTIAN. Roxane!
CYRANO (*picking up stones and throwing them at the window*).
Some pebbles! wait awhile!
ROXANE (*half-opening the casement*). Who calls me?
CHRISTIAN. I!
ROXANE. Who's that?
CHRISTIAN. Christian!
ROXANE (*disdainfully*). Oh! you?
CHRISTIAN. I would speak with you.
CYRANO (*under the balcony—to* CHRISTIAN). Good. Speak soft and low.
ROXANE. No, you speak stupidly!
CHRISTIAN. Oh, pity me!
ROXANE. No! you love me no more!
CHRISTIAN (*prompted by* CYRANO). You say—Great Heaven!
I love no more?—when—I—love more and more!
ROXANE (*who was about to shut the casement, pausing*). Hold!
'tis a trifle better! ay, a trifle!
CHRISTIAN (*same play*). Love grew apace, rocked by the anxious beating . . .
Of this poor heart, which the cruel wanton boy . . .
Took for a cradle!
ROXANE (*coming out on to the balcony*). That is better! But
An if you deem that Cupid be so cruel
You should have stifled baby-love in's cradle!
CHRISTIAN (*same play*). Ah, Madame, I assayed, but all in vain
This . . . new-born babe is a young . . . Hercules!
ROXANE. Still better!
CHRISTIAN (*same play*). Thus he strangled in my heart
The . . . serpents twain, of . . . Pride . . . and Doubt!
ROXANE (*leaning over the balcony*). Well said!
—But why so faltering? Has mental palsy
Seized on your faculty imaginative?

CYRANO (*drawing* CHRISTIAN *under the balcony, and slipping into his place*). Give place! This waxes critical! . . .

ROXANE. To-day . . .
Your words are hesitating.

CYRANO (*imitating* CHRISTIAN—*in a whisper*). Night has come. . . .
In the dusk they grope their way to find your ear.

ROXANE. But my words find no such impediment.

CYRANO. They find their way at once? Small wonder that!
For 'tis within my heart they find their home;
Bethink how large my heart, how small your ear!
And,—from fair heights descending, words fall fast,
But mine must mount, Madame, and that takes time!

ROXANE. Meseems that your last words have learned to climb.

CYRANO. With practice such gymnastic grows less hard!

ROXANE. In truth, I seem to speak from distant heights!

CYRANO. True, far above; at such a height 'twere death
If a hard word from you fell on my heart.

ROXANE (*moving*). I will come down. . . .

CYRANO (*hastily*). No!

ROXANE (*showing him the bench under the balcony*). Mount then on the bench!

CYRANO (*starting back alarmed*). No!

ROXANE. How, you will not?

CYRANO (*more and more moved*). Stay awhile! 'Tis sweet, . . .
The rare occasion, when our hearts can speak
Our selves unseen, unseeing!

ROXANE. Why—unseen?

CYRANO. Ay, it is sweet! Half hidden,—half revealed—
You see the dark folds of my shrouding cloak,
And I, the glimmering whiteness of your dress:
I but a shadow—you a radiance fair!
Know you what such a moment holds for me?
If ever I were eloquent . . .

ROXANE. You were!

CYRANO. Yet never till to-night my speech has sprung
Straight from my heart as now it springs.

ROXANE. Why not?

CYRANO. Till now I spoke haphazard . . .

ROXANE. What?

CYRANO. Your eyes
Have beams that turn men dizzy!—But to-night
Methinks I shall find speech for the first time!

ROXANE. 'Tis true, your voice rings with a tone that's new.
CYRANO (*coming nearer, passionately*). Ay, a new tone! In the tender, sheltering dusk
I dare to be myself for once,—at last!
(*He stops, falters.*) What say I? I know not!—Oh, pardon me—
It thrills me,—'tis so sweet, so novel . . .
ROXANE. How?
So novel?
CYRANO (*off his balance, trying to find the thread of his sentence*).
Ay,—to be at last sincere;
Till now, my chilled heart, fearing to be mocked . . .
ROXANE. Mocked, and for what?
CYRANO. For its mad beating!—Ay,
My heart has clothed itself with witty words,
To shroud itself from curious eyes:—impelled
At times to aim at a star, I stay my hand,
And, fearing ridicule,—cull a wild flower!
ROXANE. A wild flower's sweet.
CYRANO. Ay, but to-night—the star!
ROXANE. Oh! never have you spoken thus before!
CYRANO. If, leaving Cupid's arrows, quivers, torches,
We turned to seek for sweeter—fresher things!
Instead of sipping in a pygmy glass
Dull fashionable waters,—did we try
How the soul slakes its thirst in fearless draught
By drinking from the river's flooding brim!
ROXANE. But wit! . . .
CYRANO. If I have used it to arrest you
At the first starting,—now, 'twould be an outrage,
An insult—to the perfumed Night—to Nature—
To speak fine words that garnish vain love-letters!
Look up but at her stars! The quiet Heaven
Will ease our hearts of all things artificial;
I fear lest, 'midst the alchemy we're skilled in
The truth of sentiment dissolve and vanish,—
The soul exhausted by these empty pastimes,
The gain of fine things be the loss of all things!
ROXANE. But wit? I say . . .
CYRANO. In love 'tis crime,—'tis hateful!
Turning frank loving into subtle fencing!
At last the moment comes, inevitable,—
—Oh, woe for those who never know that moment!—

When feeling love exists in us, ennobling,
Each well-weighed word is futile and soul-saddening!

ROXANE. Well, if that moment's come for us—suppose it!
What words would serve you?

CYRANO. All, all, all, whatever
That came to me, e'en as they came, I'd fling them
In a wild cluster, not a careful bouquet.
I love thee! I am mad! I love, I stifle!
Thy name is in my heart as in a sheep-bell,
And as I ever tremble, thinking of thee,
Ever the bell shakes, ever thy name ringeth!
All things of thine I mind, for I love all things;
I know that last year on the twelfth of May-month,
To walk abroad, one day you changed your hair-plaits!
I am so used to take your hair for daylight
That,—like as when the eye stares on the sun's disk,
One sees long after a red blot on all things—
So, when I quit thy beams, my dazzled vision
Sees upon all things a blonde stain imprinted.

ROXANE (*agitated*). Why, this is love indeed! . . .

CYRANO. Ay, true, the feeling
Which fills me, terrible and jealous, truly
Love,—which is ever sad amid its transports!
Love,—and yet, strangely, not a selfish passion!
I for your joy would gladly lay mine own down,
—E'en though you never were to know it,—never!
—If but at times I might—far off and lonely,—
Hear some gay echo of the joy I bought you!
Each glance of thine awakes in me a virtue,—
A novel, unknown valor. Dost begin, sweet,
To understand? So late, dost understand me?
Feel'st thou my soul, here, through the darkness mounting?
Too fair the night! Too fair, too fair the moment!
That I should speak thus, and that you should hearken!
Too fair! In moments when my hopes rose proudest.
I never hoped such guerdon. Naught is left me
But to die now! Have words of mine the power
To make you tremble,—throned there in the branches?
Ay, like a leaf among the leaves, you tremble!
You tremble! For I feel,—an if you will it,
Or will it not,—your hand's beloved trembling
Thrills through the branches, down your sprays of jasmine!

[*He kisses passionately one of the hanging tendrils.*

ROXANE. Ay! I am trembling, weeping!—I am thine!
Thou hast conquered all of me!
CYRANO. Then let death come!
'Tis I, 'tis I myself, who conquered thee!
One thing, but one, I dare to ask——
CHRISTIAN (*under the balcony*). A kiss!
ROXANE (*drawing back*). What?
CYRANO. Oh!
ROXANE. You ask . . . ?
CYRANO. I . . .
(*To* CHRISTIAN, *whispering.*) Fool! you go too quick!
CHRISTIAN. Since she is moved thus—I will profit by it!
CYRANO (*to* ROXANE). My words sprang thoughtlessly, but now I see—
Shame on me!—I was too presumptuous.
ROXANE (*a little chilled*). How quickly you withdraw.
CYRANO. Yes, I withdraw
Without withdrawing! Hurt I modesty?
If so—the kiss I asked—oh, grant it not.
CHRISTIAN (*to* CYRANO, *pulling him by his cloak*). Why?
CYRANO. Silence, Christian! Hush!
ROXANE (*leaning over*). What whisper you?
CYRANO. I chid myself for my too bold advances;
Said, "Silence, Christian!"
(*The lutes begin to play.*) Hark! Wait awhile, . . .
Steps come!
[ROXANE *shuts the window.* CYRANO *listens to the lutes, one of which plays a merry, the other a melancholy, tune.*
Why, they play sad—then gay—then sad!
What? Neither man nor woman?—oh! a monk!
[*Enter a* CAPUCHIN FRIAR, *with a lantern. He goes from house to house, looking at every door.*
CYRANO (*to the* FRIAR). What do you, playing at Diogenes?
THE FRIAR. I seek the house of Madame . . .
CHRISTIAN. Oh! plague take him!
THE FRIAR. Madeleine Robin . . .
CHRISTIAN. What would he? . . .
CYRANO (*pointing to a street at the back*). This way!
Straight on . . .
THE FRIAR. I thank you, and, in your intention
Will tell my rosary to its last bead. (*He goes out.*)
CYRANO. Good luck! My blessings rest upon your cowl! (*He goes back to* CHRISTIAN.)

CHRISTIAN. Oh! win for me that kiss . . .
CYRANO. No!
CHRISTIAN. Soon or late! . . .
CYRANO. 'Tis true! The moment of intoxication—
Of madness,—when your mouths are sure to meet
Thanks to your fair mustache—and her rose lips!
(*To himself.*) I'd fainer it should come thanks to . . .
[*A sound of shutters reopening.* CHRISTIAN *goes in again under the balcony.*
ROXANE (*coming out on balcony*). Still there?
We spoke of a . . .
CYRANO. A kiss! The word is sweet.
I see not why your lip should shrink from it;
If the word burns it,—what would the kiss do?
Oh! let it not your bashfulness affright;
Have you not, all this time, insensibly,
Left badinage aside, and unalarmèd
Glided from smile to sigh,—from sigh to weeping?
Glide gently, imperceptibly, still onward—
From tear to kiss,—a moment's thrill!—a heartbeat!
ROXANE. Hush! hush!
CYRANO. A kiss, when all is said,—what is it?
An oath that's ratified,—a sealèd promise,
A heart's avowal claiming confirmation,—
A rose-dot on the "i" of "adoration,"—
A secret that to mouth, not ear, is whispered,—
Brush of a bee's wing, that makes time eternal,—
Communion perfumed like the spring's wild flowers,—
The heart's relieving in the heart's outbreathing,
When to the lips the soul's flood rises, brimming!
ROXANE. Hush! hush!
CYRANO. A kiss, Madame, is honorable:
The Queen of France, to a most favored lord
Did grant a kiss—the Queen herself!
ROXANE. What then?
CYRANO (*speaking more warmly*). Buckingham suffered dumbly,—so have I,—
Adored his Queen, as loyally as I,—
Was sad, but faithful,—so am I . . .
ROXANE. And you
Are fair as Buckingham!
CYRANO (*aside—suddenly cooled*). True,—I forgot!
ROXANE. Must I then bid thee mount to cull this flower? . . .

CYRANO (*pushing* CHRISTIAN *toward the balcony*). Mount!
ROXANE. This heart-breathing! . . .
CYRANO. Mount!
ROXANE. This brush of bee's wing! . . .
CYRANO. Mount!
CHRISTIAN (*hesitating*). But I feel now, as though 'twere ill done!
ROXANE. This moment infinite! . . .
CYRANO (*still pushing him*). Come, blockhead, mount.
[CHRISTIAN *springs forward, and by means of the bench, the branches, and the pillars, climbs to the balcony and strides over it.*
CHRISTIAN. Ah, Roxane! (*He takes her in his arms, and bends over her lips.*)
CYRANO. Aie! Strange pain that wrings my heart!
The kiss, love's feast, so near! I, Lazarus,
Lie at the gate in darkness. Yet to me
Falls still a crumb or two from the rich man's board—
Ay, 'tis my heart receives thee, Roxane—mine!
For on the lips you press you kiss as well
The words I spoke just now!—my words—my words!
(*The lutes play.*) A sad air,—a gay air: the monk!
(*He begins to run as if he came from a long way off, and cries out.*) Holà!
ROXANE. Who is it?
CYRANO. I—I was but passing by . . .
Is Christian there?
CHRISTIAN (*astonished*). Cyrano!
ROXANE. Good-day, cousin!
CYRANO. Cousin, good-day!
ROXANE. I'm coming. (*She disappears into the house. At the back re-enter the* FRIAR.)
CHRISTIAN (*seeing him*). Back again! (*He follows* ROXANE.)
THE FRIAR. 'Tis here,—I'm sure of it—Madame Madeleine Robin.
CYRANO. Why, you said Ro-*lin.*
THE FRIAR. No, not I.
B, i, n, *bin!*
ROXANE (*appearing on the threshold, followed by* RAGUENEAU, *who carries a lantern, and* CHRISTIAN). What is't?
THE FRIAR. A letter.
CHRISTIAN. What?
THE FRIAR (*to* ROXANE). Oh, it can boot but holy business!
'Tis from a worthy lord . . .
ROXANE (*to* CHRISTIAN). De Guiche!

CHRISTIAN. He dares. . . .

ROXANE. Oh, he will not importune me forever!
(*Unsealing the letter.*) I love you,—therefore——
(*She reads in a low voice by the aid of* RAGUENEAU'S *lantern.*)
"LADY, The drums beat;
My regiment buckles its harness on
And starts; but I,—they deem me gone before—
But I stay. I have dared to disobey
Your mandate. I am here in convent walls.
I come to you to-night. By this poor monk—
A simple fool who knows not what he bears—
I send this missive to apprise your ear.
Your lips erewhile have smiled on me, too sweet:
I go not ere I've seen them once again!
I would be private; send each soul away,
Receive alone him,—whose great boldness you
Have deigned, I hope, to pardon, ere he asks,—
He who is ever your—*et cetera.*"
(*To the* MONK.) Father, this is the matter of the letter:—
(*All come near her, and she reads aloud.*) "LADY,
The Cardinal's wish is law; albeit
It be to you unwelcome. For this cause
I send these lines—to your fair ear addressed—
By a holy man, discreet, intelligent:
It is our will that you receive from him,
In your own house, the marriage (*she turns the page*) benediction
Straightway, this night. Unknown to all the world
Christian becomes your husband. Him we send.
He is abhorrent to your choice. Let be.
Resign yourself, and this obedience
Will be by Heaven well recompensed. Receive,
Fair lady, all assurance of respect,
From him who ever was, and still remains,
Your humble and obliged—*et cetera.*"

THE FRIAR (*with great delight*). O worthy lord! I knew naught was to fear;
It could be but a holy business!

ROXANE (*to* CHRISTIAN, *in a low voice*). Am I not apt at reading letters?

CHRISTIAN. Hum!

ROXANE (*aloud, with despair*). But this is horrible!

THE FRIAR (*who has turned his lantern on* CYRANO). 'Tis you?

CHRISTIAN. 'Tis I!

THE FRIAR (*turning the light on to him, and as if a doubt struck him on seeing his beauty*). But . . .

ROXANE (*quickly*). I have overlooked the postscript—see:—
"Give twenty pistoles for the Convent."

THE FRIAR. . . . Oh!
Most worthy lord!
(*To* ROXANE.) Submit you?

ROXANE (*with a martyr's look*). I submit!
[*While* RAGUENEAU *opens the door, and* CHRISTIAN *invites the* FRIAR *to enter, she whispers to* CYRANO.
Oh, keep De Guiche at bay! He will be here!
Let him not enter till . . .

CYRANO. I understand!
(*To the* FRIAR.) What time need you to tie the marriage-knot?

THE FRIAR. A quarter of an hour.

CYRANO (*pushing them all toward the house*). Go! I stay.

ROXANE (*to* CHRISTIAN). Come! . . . (*They enter.*)

CYRANO. Now, how to detain De Guiche so long?
(*He jumps on the bench, climbs to the balcony by the wall.*)
Come! . . . up I go! . . . I have my plan! . . .
(*The lutes begin to play a very sad air.*) What ho!
[*The tremolo grows more and more weird.*
It is a man! ay! 'tis a man this time! (*He is on the balcony, pulls his hat over his eyes, takes off his sword, wraps himself in his cloak, then leans over.*)
'Tis not too high! (*He strides across the balcony, and drawing to him a long branch of one of the trees that are by the garden wall, he hangs on to it with both hands, ready to let himself fall.*)
I'll shake this atmosphere!

DE GUICHE (*who enters, masked, feeling his way in the dark*).
What can that cursèd Friar be about?

CYRANO. The devil! . . . If he knows my voice!
(*Letting go with one hand, he pretends to turn an invisible key. Solemnly.*) Cric! Crac!
Assume thou, Cyrano, to serve the turn,
The accent of thy native Bergerac! . . .

DE GUICHE (*looking at the house*). 'Tis there. I see dim,—this mask hinders me! (*He is about to enter, when* CYRANO *leaps from the balcony, holding on to the branch, which bends, dropping him between the door and* DE GUICHE; *he pretends to fall heavily, as from a great height, and lies*

flat on the ground, motionless, as if stunned. DE GUICHE *starts back.*)

What's this? (*When he looks up, the branch has sprung back into its place. He sees only the sky, and is lost in amazement.*)

Where fell that man from?

CYRANO (*sitting up, and speaking with a Gascon accent*). From the moon!

DE GUICHE. From . . .?

CYRANO (*in a dreamy voice*). What's o'clock?

DE GUICHE. He's lost his mind, for sure!

CYRANO. What hour? What country this? What month? What day?

DE GUICHE. But . . .

CYRANO. I am stupefied!

DE GUICHE. Sir!

CYRANO. Like a bomb
I fell from the moon!

DE GUICHE (*impatiently*). Come now!

CYRANO (*rising, in a terrible voice*). I say,—the moon!

DE GUICHE (*recoiling*). Good, good! let it be so! . . . He's raving mad!

CYRANO (*walking up to him*). I say from the moon! I mean no metaphor! . . .

DE GUICHE. But . . .

CYRANO. Was't a hundred years—a minute, since?
—I cannot guess what time that fall embraced!—
That I was in that saffron-colored ball?

DE GUICHE (*shrugging his shoulders*). Good! let me pass!

CYRANO (*intercepting him*). Where am I? Tell the truth!
Fear not to tell! Oh, spare me not! Where? where?
Have I fallen like a shooting star?

DE GUICHE. *Morbleu!*

CYRANO. The fall was lightning-quick! no time to choose
Where I should fall—I know not where it be!
Oh, tell me! Is it on a moon or earth,
That my posterior weight has landed me?

DE GUICHE. I tell you, Sir . . .

CYRANO (*with a screech of terror, which makes* DE GUICHE *start back*). No? Can it be? I'm on
A planet where men have black faces?

DE GUICHE (*putting his hand to his face*). What?

CYRANO (*feigning great alarm*). Am I in Africa? A native you?

DE GUICHE (*who has remembered his mask*). This mask of mine . . .
CYRANO (*pretending to be reassured*). In Venice? ha!—or Rome?
DE GUICHE (*trying to pass*). A lady waits . . .
CYRANO (*quite reassured*). Oh-ho! I am in Paris!
DE GUICHE (*smiling in spite of himself*). The fool is comical!
CYRANO. You laugh?
DE GUICHE. I laugh,
But would get by!
CYRANO (*beaming with joy*). I have shot back to Paris! (*Quite at ease, laughing, dusting himself, bowing.*)
Come—pardon me—by the last water-spout,
Covered with ether,—accident of travel!
My eyes still full of star-dust, and my spurs
Encumbered by the planets' filaments! (*Picking something off his sleeve.*)
Ha! on my doublet?—ah, a comet's hair! . . . (*He puffs as if to blow it away.*)
DE GUICHE (*beside himself*). Sir! . . .
CYRANO (*just as he is about to pass, holds out his leg as if to show him something and stops him*). In my leg—the calf—there is a tooth
Of the Great Bear, and, passing Neptune close,
I would avoid his trident's point, and fell,
Thus sitting, plump, right in the Scales! My weight
Is marked, still registered, up there in heaven! (*Hurriedly preventing* DE GUICHE *from passing, and detaining him by the button of his doublet.*)
I swear to you that if you squeezed my nose
It would spout milk!
DE GUICHE. Milk?
CYRANO. From the Milky Way!
DE GUICHE. Oh, go to hell!
CYRANO (*crossing his arms*). I fall, Sir, out of heaven!
Now, would you credit it, that as I fell
I saw that Sirius wears a nightcap? True!
(*Confidentially.*) The other Bear is still too small to bite.
(*Laughing.*) I went through the Lyre, but I snapped a cord;
(*Grandiloquent.*) I mean to write the whole thing in a book;
The small gold stars, that, wrapped up in my cloak,
I carried safe away at no small risks,
Will serve for asterisks i' the printed page!
DE GUICHE. Come, make an end! I want . . .

CYRANO. Oh-ho! You are sly!
DE GUICHE. Sir!
CYRANO. You would worm all out of me!—the way
The moon is made, and if men breathe and live
In its rotund cucurbita?
DE GUICHE (*angrily*). No, no!
I want . . .
CYRANO. Ha, ha!—to know how I got up?
Hark! It was by a method all my own.
DE GUICHE (*wearied*). He's mad!
CYRANO (*contemptuously*). No! not for me the stupid eagle
Of Regiomontanus, nor the timid
Pigeon of Archytas—neither of those!
DE GUICHE. Ay, tis' a fool! But 'tis a learned fool!
CYRANO. No imitator I of other men!
[DE GUICHE *has succeeded in getting by, and goes toward* ROXANE'S *door.* CYRANO *follows him, ready to stop him by force*
Six novel methods, all, this brain invented!
DE GUICHE (*turning round*). Six?
CYRANO (*volubly*). First, with body naked as your hand,
Festooned about with crystal flacons, full
O' th' tears the early morning dew distils;
My body to the sun's fierce rays exposed
To let it suck me up, as 't sucks the dew!
DE GUICHE (*surprised, making one step toward* CYRANO). Ah! that makes one!
CYRANO (*stepping back, and enticing him further away*). And then, the second way,
To generate wind—for my impetus—
To rarefy air, in a cedar case,
By mirrors placed icosahedron-wise.
DE GUICHE (*making another step*). Two!
CYRANO (*still stepping backward*). Or—for I have some mechanic skill—
To make a grasshopper, with springs of steel,
And launch myself by quick succeeding fires
Saltpeter-fed to the stars' pastures blue!
DE GUICHE (*unconsciously following him and counting on his fingers*). Three!
CYRANO. Or (since fumes have property to mount)—
To charge a globe with fumes, sufficiently
To carry me aloft!

DE GUICHE (*same play, more and more astonished*). Well, that makes four!

CYRANO. Or smear myself with marrow from a bull,
Since, at the lowest point of Zodiac,
Phœbus well loves to suck that marrow up!

DE GUICHE (*amazed*). Five!

CYRANO (*who, while speaking, had drawn him to the other side of the square near a bench*). Sitting on an iron platform—thence
To throw a magnet in the air. This is
A method well conceived—the magnet flown,
Infallibly the iron will pursue:
Then quick! relaunch your magnet, and you thus
Can mount and mount unmeasured distances!

DE GUICHE. Here are six excellent expedients!
Which of the six chose you?

CYRANO. Why, none!—a seventh!

DE GUICHE. Astonishing! What was it?

CYRANO. I'll recount.

DE GUICHE. This wild eccentric becomes interesting!

CYRANO (*making a noise like the waves, with weird gestures*). Houüh! houüh!

DE GUICHE. Well.

CYRANO. You have guessed?

DE GUICHE. Not I!

CYRANO. The tide!
I' th' witching hour when the moon woos the wave,
I laid me, fresh from a sea-bath, on the shore—
And, failing not to put head foremost—for
The hair holds the sea-water in its mesh—
I rose in air, straight! straight! like angel's flight,
And mounted, mounted, gently, effortless, . . .
When lo! a sudden shock! Then . . .

DE GUICHE (*overcome by curiosity, sitting down on the bench*). Then?

CYRANO. Oh! then . . . (*Suddenly returning to his natural voice.*)
The quarter's gone—I'll hinder you no more:
The marriage-vows are made.

DE GUICHE (*springing up*). What? Am I mad?
That voice? (*The house-door opens.* LACKEYS *appear carrying lighted candelabra. Light.* CYRANO *gracefully uncovers.*)
That nose—Cyrano?

CYRANO (*bowing*). Cyrano.
While we were chatting, they have plighted troth.
DE GUICHE. Who?
[*He turns round. Tableau. Behind the* LACKEYS *appear* ROXANE *and* CHRISTIAN, *holding each other by the hand. The* FRIAR *follows them, smiling.* RAGUENEAU *also holds a candlestick. The* DUENNA *closes the rear, bewildered, having made a hasty toilet.*
Heavens!
DE GUICHE (*to* ROXANE). You?
(*Recognizing* CHRISTIAN, *in amazement.*) He?
(*Bowing, with admiration, to* ROXANE.) Cunningly contrived!
(*To* CYRANO.) My compliments—Sir Apparatus-maker!
Your story would arrest at Peter's gate
Saints eager for their Paradise! Note well
The details. 'Faith! They'd make a stirring book!
CYRANO (*bowing*). I shall not fail to follow your advice.
THE FRIAR (*showing with satisfaction the two lovers to* DE GUICHE).
A handsome couple, son, made one by you!
DE GUICHE (*with a freezing look*). Ay!
(*To* ROXANE.) Bid your bridegroom, Madame, fond farewell.
ROXANE. Why so?
DE GUICHE (*to* CHRISTIAN). Even now the regiment departs.
Join it!
ROXANE. It goes to battle?
DE GUICHE. Without doubt.
ROXANE. But the Cadets go not?
DE GUICHE. Oh ay! they go. (*Drawing out the paper he had put in his pocket.*)
Here is the order.
(*To* CHRISTIAN.) Baron, bear it, quick!
ROXANE (*throwing herself in* CHRISTIAN'S *arms*). Christian!
DE GUICHE (*sneeringly to* CYRANO). The wedding-night is far, methinks!
CYRANO (*aside*). He thinks to give me pain of death by this!
CHRISTIAN (*to* ROXANE). Oh! once again! Your lips!
CYRANO. Come, come, enough!
CHRISTIAN (*still kissing* ROXANE). —'Tis hard to leave her, you know not . . .
CYRANO (*trying to draw him away*). I know. (*Sound of drums beating a march in the distance.*)
DE GUICHE. The regiment starts!

ROXANE (*to* CYRANO, *holding back* CHRISTIAN, *whom* CYRANO *is drawing away*). Oh!—I trust him you!
Promise me that no risks shall put his life
In danger!
CYRANO. I will try my best, but promise . . .
That I cannot!
ROXANE. But swear he shall be prudent?
CYRANO. Again, I'll do my best, but . . .
ROXANE. In the siege
Let him not suffer!
CYRANO. All that man can do,
I . . .
ROXANE. That he shall be faithful!
CYRANO. Doubtless, but . . .
ROXANE. That he will write oft?
CYRANO (*pausing*). That, I promise you!
(*Curtain.*)

ACT IV

THE CADETS OF GASCONY.

Post occupied by company of CARBON DE CASTEL-JALOUX *at the siege of Arras.*

In the background an embankment across the whole stage. Beyond, view of plain extending to the horizon. The country covered with intrenchments. The walls of Arras and the outlines of its roofs against the sky in the distance. Tents. Arms strewn about, drums, etc. Day is breaking with a faint glimmer of yellow sunrise in the east. Sentinels at different points. Watch-fires. The CADETS OF GASCONY, *wrapped in their mantles, are sleeping.* CARBON DE CASTEL-JALOUX *and* LE BRET *are keeping watch. They are very pale and thin.* CHRISTIAN *sleeps among the others in his cloak in the foreground, his face illuminated by the fire. Silence.*

LE BRET. 'Tis terrible.
CARBON. Not a morsel left.
LE BRET. *Mordioux!*
CARBON (*making a sign that he should speak lower*). Curse under your breath. You will awake them.
(*To the* CADETS.) Hush! Sleep on.
(*To* LE BRET.) He who sleeps, dines!

LE BRET. But that is sorry comfort for the sleepless! . . . What starvation! (*Firing is heard in the distance.*)

CARBON. Oh, plague take their firing! 'Twill wake my sons. (*To the* CADETS, *who lift up their heads.*) Sleep on! (*Firing is again heard, nearer this time.*)

A CADET (*moving*). The devil! . . . Again.

CARBON. 'Tis nothing! 'Tis Cyrano coming back! (*Those who have lifted up their heads prepare to sleep again.*)

A SENTINEL (*from without*). *Ventrebieu!* Who goes there?

THE VOICE OF CYRANO. Bergerac.

THE SENTINEL (*who is on the redoubt*). *Ventrebieu!* Who goes there?

CYRANO (*appearing at the top*). Bergerac, idiot! (*He comes down;* LE BRET *advances anxiously to meet him.*)

LE BRET. Heavens!

CYRANO (*making signs that he should not awake the others*). Hush!

LE BRET. Wounded?

CYRANO. Oh! you know it has become their custom to shoot at me every morning and to miss me.

LE BRET. This passes all! To take letters at each day's dawn. To risk . . .

CYRANO (*stopping before* CHRISTIAN). I promised he should write often. (*He looks at him.*) He sleeps. How pale he is! But how handsome still, despite his sufferings. If his poor little lady-love knew that he is dying of hunger . . .

LE BRET. Get you quick to bed.

CYRANO. Nay, never scold, Le Bret. I ran but little risk. I have found me a spot to pass the Spanish lines, where each night they lie drunk.

LE BRET. You should try to bring us back provision.

CYRANO. A man must carry no weight who would get by there! But there will be surprise for us this night. The French will eat or die . . . if I mistake not!

LE BRET. Oh! . . . tell me! . . .

CYRANO. Nay, not yet. I am not certain . . . You will see!

CARBON. It is disgraceful that we should starve while we're besieging!

LE BRET. Alas, how full of complication is this siege of Arras! To think that while we are besieging, we should ourselves be caught in a trap and besieged by the Cardinal Infante of Spain.

CYRANO. It were well done if he should be besieged in his turn.

LE BRET. I am in earnest.

CYRANO. Oh! indeed!

LE BRET. To think you risk a life so precious . . . for the sake of a letter . . . Thankless one. (*Seeing him turning to enter the tent.*) Where are you going?

CYRANO. I am going to write another. (*He enters the tent and disappears.*)

[*The day is breaking in a rosy light. The town of Arras is golden in the horizon. The report of cannon is heard in the distance, followed immediately by the beating of drums far away to the left. Other drums are heard much nearer. Sounds of stirring in the camp. Voices of officers in the distance.*

CARBON (*sighing*). The *reveille!* (*The* CADETS *move and stretch themselves.*) Nourishing sleep! thou art at an end! . . . I know well what will be their first cry!

A CADET (*sitting up*). I am so hungry!

ANOTHER. I am dying of hunger.

TOGETHER. Oh!

CARBON. Up with you!

THIRD CADET. —Cannot move a limb.

FOURTH CADET. Nor can I.

THE FIRST (*looking at himself in a bit of armor*). My tongue is yellow. The air at this season of the year is hard to digest.

ANOTHER. My coronet for a bit of Chester!

ANOTHER. If none can furnish to my gaster wherewith to make a pint of chyle, I shall retire to my tent—like Achilles!

ANOTHER. Oh! something! were it but a crust!

CARBON (*going to the tent and calling softly*). Cyrano!

ALL THE CADETS. We are dying!

CARBON (*continuing to speak under his breath at the opening of the tent*). Come to my aid, you, who have the art of quick retort and gay jest. Come, hearten them up.

SECOND CADET (*rushing toward another who is munching something*). What are you crunching there?

FIRST CADET. Cannon-wads soaked in axle-grease! 'Tis poor hunting round about Arras!

A CADET (*entering*). I have been after game.

ANOTHER (*following him*). And I after fish.

ALL (*rushing to the two newcomers*). Well! what have you brought?—a pheasant?—a carp?—Come, show us quick.

THE ANGLER. A gudgeon!

THE SPORTSMAN. A sparrow!

ALL TOGETHER (*beside themselves*). 'Tis more than can be borne! We will mutiny!

CARBON. Cyrano! come to my help. (*The daylight has now come.*)
CYRANO (*appearing from the tent, very calm, with a pen stuck behind his ear and a book in his hand*). What is wrong? (*Silence.*)
(*To the* FIRST CADET.) Why drag you your legs so sorrowfully?
THE CADET. I have something in my heels which weighs them down.
CYRANO. And what may that be?
THE CADET. My stomach!
CYRANO. So have I, 'faith!
THE CADET. It must be in your way?
CYRANO. Nay, I am all the taller.
A THIRD. My stomach's hollow.
CYRANO. 'Faith, 'twill make a fine drum to sound the assault.
ANOTHER. I have a ringing in my ears.
CYRANO. No, no, 'tis false; a hungry stomach has no ears.
ANOTHER. Oh, to eat something—something oily!
CYRANO (*pulling off the* CADET'S *helmet and holding it out to him*). Behold your salad!
ANOTHER. What, in God's name, can we devour?
CYRANO (*throwing him the book which he is carrying*). The "Iliad."
ANOTHER. The first minister in Paris has his four meals a day!
CYRANO. 'Twere courteous an he sent you a few partridges!
THE SAME. And why not? with wine, too?
CYRANO. A little Burgundy. Richelieu, *s'il vous plait!*
THE SAME. He could send it by one of his friars.
CYRANO. Ay! by His Eminence Joseph himself.
ANOTHER. I am as ravenous as an ogre!
CYRANO. Eat your patience, then.
THE FIRST CADET (*shrugging his shoulders*). Always your pointed word!
CYRANO. Ay, pointed words!

I would fain die thus, some soft summer eve,
Making a pointed word for a good cause.
—To make a soldier's end by soldier's sword,
Wielded by some brave adversary—die
On blood-stained turf, not on a fever-bed,
A point upon my lips, a point within my heart.

CRIES FROM ALL. I'm hungry!
CYRANO (*crossing his arms*). All your thoughts of meat and drink!

Bertrand the fifer!—you were shepherd once,—
Draw from its double leathern case your fife,
Play to these greedy, guzzling soldiers. Play

Old country airs with plaintive rhythm recurring,
Where lurk sweet echoes of the dear home-voices,
Each note of which calls like a little sister,
Those airs slow, slow ascending, as the smoke-wreaths
Rise from the hearthstones of our native hamlets,
Their music strikes the ear like Gascon *patois!* . . .

[*The old man seats himself, and gets his flute ready.*

Your flute was now a warrior in durance;
But on its stem your fingers are a-dancing
A bird-like minuet! O flute! Remember
That flutes were made of reeds first, not laburnum;
Make us a music pastoral days recalling—
The soul-time of your youth, in country pastures! . . .

[*The old man begins to play the airs of Languedoc.*

Hark to the music, Gascons! . . . 'Tis no longer
The piercing fife of camp—but 'neath his fingers
The flute of the woods! No more the call to combat,
'Tis now the love-song of the wandering goat-herds! . . .
Hark! . . . 'tis the valley, the wet *landes,* the forest,
The sunburnt shepherd-boy with scarlet *béret,*
The dusk of evening on the Dordogne river,—
'Tis Gascony! Hark, Gascons, to the music!

[*The* CADETS *sit with bowed heads; their eyes have a far-off look as if dreaming, and they surreptitiously wipe away their tears with their cuffs and the corner of their cloaks.*

CARBON (*to* CYRANO *in a whisper*). But you make them weep!

CYRANO. Ay, for homesickness. A nobler pain than hunger,—'tis of the soul, not of the body! I am well pleased to see their pain change its *viscera.* Heart-ache is better than stomach-ache.

CARBON. But you weaken their courage by playing thus on their heart-strings!

CYRANO (*making a sign to a drummer to approach*). Not I. The hero that sleeps in Gascon blood is ever ready to awake in them. 'Twould suffice . . . (*He makes a signal; the drum beats.*)

ALL THE CADETS (*stand up and rush to take arms*). What? What is it?

CYRANO (*smiling*). You see! One roll of the drum is enough! Good-by dreams, regrets, native land, love. . . . All that the pipe called forth the drum has chased away!

A CADET (*looking toward the back of the stage*). Ho! here comes Monsieur de Guiche.

All the Cadets (*muttering*). Ugh! . . . Ugh! . . .
Cyrano (*smiling*). A flattering welcome!
A Cadet. We are sick to death of him!
Another Cadet. —With his lace collar over his armor, playing the fine gentleman!
Another. As if one wore linen over steel!
The First. It were good for a bandage had he boils on his neck.
The Second. Another plotting courtier!
Another Cadet. His uncle's own nephew!
Carbon. For all that—a Gascon.
The First. Ay, false Gascon! . . . trust him not . . .
Gascons should ever be crack-brained. . . .
Naught more dangerous than a rational Gascon.
Le Bret. How pale he is!
Another. Oh! he is hungry, just like us poor devils; but under his cuirass, with its fine gilt nails, his stomach-ache glitters brave in the sun.
Cyrano (*hurriedly*). Let us not seem to suffer either! Out with your cards, pipes, and dice. . . . (*All begin spreading out the games on the drums, the stools, the ground, and on their cloaks, and light long pipes.*) And I shall read Descartes.

[*He walks up and down, reading a little book which he has drawn from his pocket. Tableau. Enter* De Guiche. *All appear absorbed and happy. He is very pale. He goes up to* Carbon.

De Guiche (*to* Carbon). Good-day! (*They examine each other. Aside, with satisfaction.*) He's green.
Carbon (*aside*). He has nothing left but eyes.
De Guiche (*looking at the* Cadets).

Here are the rebels! Ay, Sirs, on all sides
I hear that in your ranks you scoff at me;
That the Cadets, these loutish, mountain-bred,
Poor country squires, and barons of Périgord,
Scarce find for me—their Colonel—a disdain
Sufficient! call me plotter, wily courtier!
It does not please their mightiness to see
A point-lace collar on my steel cuirass,—
And they enrage, because a man, in sooth,
May be no ragged-robin, yet a Gascon!

[*Silence. All smoke and play.*

Shall I command your Captain punish you?
No.

Carbon. I am free, moreover,—will not punish—

DE GUICHE. Ah!
CARBON. I have paid my company—'tis mine:
I bow but to headquarters.
DE GUICHE. So?—In faith!
That will suffice.
(*Addressing himself to the* CADETS). I can despise your taunts;
'Tis well known how I bear me in the war;
At Bapaume, yesterday, they saw the rage
With which I beat back the Count of Bucquoi;
Assembling my own men, I fell on his,
And charged three separate times!
CYRANO (*without lifting his eyes from his book*). And your white scarf?
DE GUICHE (*surprised and gratified*). You know that detail? . . .
Troth! it happened thus:
While caracoling to recall the troops
For the third charge, a band of fugitives
Bore me with them, close by the hostile ranks:
I was in peril—capture, sudden death!—
When I thought of the good expedient
To loosen and let fall the scarf which told
My military rank; thus I contrived
—Without attention waked—to leave the foes,
And suddenly returning, reinforced
With my own men, to scatter them! And now,
—What say you, Sir?
[*The* CADETS *pretend not to be listening, but the cards and the dice-boxes remain suspended in their hands, the smoke of their pipes in their cheeks. They wait.*
CYRANO. I say, that Henri Quatre
Had not, by any dangerous odds, been forced
To strip himself of his white helmet plume.
[*Silent delight. The cards fall, the dice rattle. The smoke is puffed.*
DE GUICHE. The ruse succeeded, though! (*Same suspension of play, etc.*)
CYRANO. Oh, may be! But
One does not lightly abdicate the honor
To serve as target to the enemy.
[*Cards, dice, fall again, and the* CADETS *smoke with evident delight.*

Had I been present when your scarf fell low,
—Our courage, Sir, is of a different sort—
I would have picked it up and put it on.

DE GUICHE. Oh, ay! Another Gascon boast!

CYRANO. A boast?
Lend it to me. I pledge myself, to-night,
—With it across my breast,—to lead th' assault.

DE GUICHE. Another Gascon vaunt! You know the scarf
Lies with the enemy, upon the brink
Of the stream, . . . the place is riddled now with shot,—
No one can fetch it hither!

CYRANO (*drawing the scarf from his pocket, and holding it out to him*). Here it is.

[*Silence. The* CADETS *stifle their laughter in their cards and dice-boxes.* DE GUICHE *turns and looks at them; they instantly become grave, and set to play. One of them whistles indifferently the air just played by the fifer.*

DE GUICHE (*taking the scarf*). I thank you. It will now enable me
To make a signal,—that I had forborne
To make—till now. (*He goes to the rampart, climbs it, and waves the scarf thrice.*)

ALL. What's that?

THE SENTINEL (*from the top of the rampart*). See you yon man
Down there, who runs? . . .

DE GUICHE (*descending*). 'Tis a false Spanish spy
Who is extremely useful to my ends.
The news he carries to the enemy
Are those I prompt him with—so, in a word,
We have an influence on their decisions!

CYRANO. Scoundrel!

DE GUICHE (*carelessly knotting on his scarf*). 'Tis opportune.
What were we saying?
Ah! I have news for you. Last evening
—To victual us—the Marshal did attempt
A final effort:—secretly he went
To Dourlens, where the King's provisions be.
But—to return to camp more easily—
He took with him a goodly force of troops.
Those who attacked us now would have fine sport!
Half of the army's absent from the camp!

CARBON. Ay, if the Spaniards knew, 'twere ill for us,
But they know nothing of it?

DE GUICHE. Oh! they know.
They will attack us.
CARBON. Ah!
DE GUICHE. For my false spy
Came to warn me of their attack. He said,
"I can decide the point for their assault;
Where would you have it? I will tell them 'tis
The least defended—they'll attempt you there."
I answered, "Good. Go out of camp, but watch
My signal. Choose the point from whence it comes."
CARBON (*to* CADETS). Make ready! (*All rise; sounds of swords and belts being buckled.*)
DE GUICHE. 'Twill be in an hour.
FIRST CADET. Good! . . . (*They all sit down again and take up their games.*)
DE GUICHE (*to* CARBON). Time must be gained. The Marshal will return.
CARBON. How gain it?
DE GUICHE. You will all be good enough
To let yourselves be killed.
CYRANO. Vengeance! oho!
DE GUICHE. I do not say that, if I loved you well,
I had chosen you and yours,—but, as things stand,—
Your courage yielding to no corps the palm—
I serve my King, and serve my grudge as well.
CYRANO. Permit that I express my gratitude. . . .
DE GUICHE. I know you love to fight against five score;
You will not now complain of paltry odds. (*He goes up with* CARBON.)
CYRANO (*to* CADETS). We shall add to the Gascon coat of arms,
With its six bars of blue and gold, one more—
The blood-red bar that was a-missing there!
[DE GUICHE *speaks in a low voice with* CARBON *at the back. Orders are given. Preparations go forward.* CYRANO *goes up to* CHRISTIAN, *who stands with crossed arms.*
CYRANO (*putting his hand on* CHRISTIAN'S *shoulder*). Christian!
CHRISTIAN (*shaking his head*). Roxane!
CYRANO. Alas!
CHRISTIAN. At least, I'd send
My heart's farewell to her in a fair letter! . . .
CYRANO. I had suspicion it would be to-day, (*He draws a letter out of his doublet.*)
And had already writ . . .

CHRISTIAN. Show!
CYRANO. Will you . . . ?
CHRISTIAN (*taking the letter*). Ay! (*He opens and reads it.*)
Hold!
CYRANO. What?
CHRISTIAN. This little spot!
CYRANO (*taking the letter, with an innocent look*). A spot?
CHRISTIAN. A tear!
CYRANO. Poets, at last,—by dint of counterfeiting—
Take counterfeit for true—that is the charm!
This farewell letter,—it was passing sad,
I wept myself in writing it!
CHRISTIAN. Wept? why?
CYRANO. Oh! . . . death itself is hardly terrible, . . .
—But, ne'er to see her more! That is death's sting!
—For . . . I shall never . . . (CHRISTIAN *looks at him.*) We shall . . . (*Quickly.*) I mean, you . . .
CHRISTIAN (*snatching the letter from him*). Give me that letter! (*A rumor, far off in the camp.*)
VOICE OF SENTINEL. Who goes there? Halloo! (*Shots—voices—carriage-bells.*)
CARBON. What is it?
A SENTINEL (*on the rampart*). 'Tis a carriage! (*All rush to see.*)
CRIES. In the camp?
It enters!——It comes from the enemy!
—Fire!—No!—The coachman cries!—What does he say?
—"On the King's service." (*Everyone is on the rampart, staring. The bells come nearer.*)
DE GUICHE. The King's service? How? (*All descend and draw up in line.*)
CARBON. Uncover, all!
DE GUICHE. The King's! Draw up in line!
Let him describe his curve as it befits!
[*The carriage enters at full speed covered with dust and mud. The curtains are drawn close. Two* LACKEYS *behind. It is pulled up suddenly.*
CARBON. Beat a salute! (*A roll of drums. The* CADETS *uncover.*)
DE GUICHE. Lower the carriage-steps! (*Two* CADETS *rush forward. The door opens.*)
ROXANE (*jumping down from the carriage*). Good-day! (*All are bowing to the ground, but at the sound of a woman's voice every head is instantly raised.*)
DE GUICHE. On the King's service! You?

ROXANE. Ay,—King Love's! What other king?

CYRANO. Great God!

CHRISTIAN (*rushing forward*). Why have you come?

ROXANE. This siege—'tis too long!

CHRISTIAN. But why? . . .

ROXANE. I will tell you all!

CYRANO (*who, at the sound of her voice, has stood still, rooted to the ground, afraid to raise his eyes*). My God! dare I look at her?

DE GUICHE. You cannot remain here!

ROXANE (*merrily*). But I say yes! Who will push a drum hither for me? (*She seats herself on the drum they roll forward.*) So! I thank you. (*She laughs.*) My carriage was fired at (*proudly*) by the patrol! Look; would you not think 'twas made of a pumpkin, like Cinderella's chariot in the tale,—and the footmen out of rats? (*Sending a kiss with her lips to* CHRISTIAN.) Good-morrow! (*Examining them all.*) You look not merry, any of you! Ah! know you that 'tis a long road to get to Arras? (*Seeing* CYRANO.) Cousin, delighted!

CYRANO (*coming up to her*). But how, in Heaven's name? . . .

ROXANE. How found I the way to the army? It was simple enough, for I had but to pass on and on, as far as I saw the country laid waste. Ah, what horrors were there! Had I not seen, then I could never have believed it! Well, gentlemen, if such be the service of your King, I would fainer serve mine!

CYRANO. But 'tis sheer madness! Where in the fiend's name did you get through?

ROXANE. Where? Through the Spanish lines.

FIRST CADET. —For subtle craft, give me a woman!

DE GUICHE. But how did you pass through their lines?

LE BRET. Faith! that must have been a hard matter! . . .

ROXANE. None too hard. I but drove quietly forward in my carriage, and when some hidalgo of haughty mien would have stayed me, lo! I showed at the window my sweetest smile, and these Señors being (with no disrespect to you) the most gallant gentlemen in the world,—I passed on!

CARBON. True, that smile is a passport! But you must have been asked frequently to give an account of where you were going, Madame?

ROXANE. Yes, frequently. Then I would answer, "I go to see my lover." At that word the very fiercest Spaniard of them all would gravely shut the carriage-door, and, with a gesture that a king might envy, made signal to his men to lower the muskets

leveled at me:—then, with melancholy but withal very graceful dignity—his beaver held to the wind that the plumes might flutter bravely, he would bow low, saying to me, "Pass on, Señorita!"

CHRISTIAN. But, Roxane . . .

ROXANE. Forgive me that I said, "my lover!" But bethink you, had I said, "my husband," not one of them had let me pass!

CHRISTIAN. But . . .

ROXANE. What ails you?

DE GUICHE. You must leave this place!

ROXANE. I!

CYRANO. And that instantly!

LE BRET. No time to lose.

CHRISTIAN. Indeed, you must.

ROXANE. But wherefore must I?

CHRISTIAN (*embarrassed*). 'Tis that . . .

CYRANO (*the same*). —In three quarters of an hour . . .

DE GUICHE (*the same*). —Or for . . .

CARBON (*the same*). It were best. . . .

LE BRET (*the same*). You might . . .

ROXANE. You are going to fight?—I stay here.

ALL. No, no!

ROXANE. He is my husband! (*She throws herself into* CHRISTIAN'S *arms.*) They shall kill us both together!

CHRISTIAN. Why do you look at me thus?

ROXANE. I will tell you why!

DE GUICHE (*in despair*). 'Tis a post of mortal danger!

ROXANE (*turning round*). Mortal danger?

CYRANO. Proof enough, that he has put us here!

ROXANE (*to* DE GUICHE). So, Sir, you would have made a widow of me?

DE GUICHE. Nay, on my oath . . .

ROXANE. I will not go! I am reckless now, and I shall not stir from here!—Besides, 'tis amusing!

CYRANO. Oh-ho! So our *précieuse* is a heroine!

ROXANE. Monsieur de Bergerac, I am your cousin.

A CADET. We will defend you well!

ROXANE (*more and more excited*). I have no fear of that, my friends!

ANOTHER (*in ecstasy*). The whole camp smells sweet of orris-root!

ROXANE. And, by good luck, I have chosen a hat that will suit well with the battlefield! (*Looking at* DE GUICHE.) But were it not wisest that the Count retire? They may begin the attack.

DE GUICHE. That is not to be brooked! I go to inspect the cannon, and shall return. You have still time—think better of it!

ROXANE. Never! (DE GUICHE *goes out.*)

CHRISTIAN (*entreatingly*). Roxane!

ROXANE. No!

FIRST CADET (*to the others*). She stays!

ALL (*hurrying, hustling each other, tidying themselves*). A comb!—Soap!—My uniform is torn!—A needle!—A ribbon!—Lend your mirror!—My cuffs!—Your curling-iron!—A razor! . . .

ROXANE (*to* CYRANO, *who still pleads with her*). No! Naught shall make me stir from this spot!

CARBON (*who, like the others, has been buckling, dusting, brushing his hat, settling his plume, and drawing on his cuffs, advances to* ROXANE, *and ceremoniously*). It is perchance more seemly, since things are thus, that I present to you some of these gentlemen who are about to have the honor of dying before your eyes. (ROXANE *bows, and stands leaning on* CHRISTIAN'S *arm, while* CARBON *introduces the* CADETS *to her.*) Baron de Peyrescous de Colignac!

THE CADET (*with a low reverence*). Madame . . .

CARBON (*continuing*). Baron de Casterac de Cahuzac,—Vidame de Malgouyre Estressac Lésbas d'Escarabiot, Chevalier d'Antignac —Juzet, Baron Hillot de Blagnac—Saléchan de Castel Crabioules . . .

ROXANE. But how many names have you each?

BARON HILLOT. Scores!

CARBON (*to* ROXANE). Pray, open the hand that holds your kerchief.

ROXANE (*opens her hand, and the handkerchief falls*). Why? (*The whole company start forward to pick it up.*)

CARBON (*quickly raising it*). My company had no flag. But now, by my faith, they will have the fairest in all the camp!

ROXANE (*smiling*). 'Tis somewhat small.

CARBON (*tying the handkerchief on the staff of his lance*). But—'tis of lace!

A CADET (*to the rest*). I could die happy, having seen so sweet a face, if I had something in my stomach—were it but a nut!

CARBON (*who has overheard, indignantly*). Shame on you! What, talk of eating when a lovely woman! . . .

ROXANE. But your camp air is keen; I myself am famished. Pasties, cold *fricassée,* old wines—there is my bill of fare! Pray bring it all here. (*Consternation.*)

A Cadet. All that?

Another. But where on earth find it?

Roxane (*quietly*). In my carriage.

All. How?

Roxane. Now serve up—carve! Look a little closer at my coachman, and you will recognize a man most welcome. All the sauces can be sent to table hot, if we will!

The Cadets (*rushing pellmell to the carriage*). 'Tis Ragueneau! (*Acclamations.*) Oh, oh!

Roxane (*looking after them*). Poor fellows!

Cyrano (*kissing her hand*). Kind fairy!

Ragueneau (*standing on the box like a quack doctor at a fair*). Gentlemen! . . . (*General delight.*)

The Cadets. Bravo! bravo!

Ragueneau. . . . The Spaniards, gazing on a lady so dainty fair, overlooked the fare so dainty! . . . (*Applause.*)

Cyrano (*in a whisper to* Christian). Hark, Christian!

Ragueneau. . . . And, occupied with gallantry, perceived not—(*He draws a plate from under the seat, and holds it up.*) —The galantine! . . . (*Applause. The galantine passes from hand to hand.*)

Cyrano (*still whispering to* Christian). Prythee, one word!

Ragueneau. And Venus so attracted their eyes that Diana could secretly pass by with—(*he holds up a shoulder of mutton*)—her fawn! (*Enthusiasm. Twenty hands are held out to seize the shoulder of mutton.*)

Cyrano (*in a lower whisper to* Christian). I must speak to you!

Roxane (*to the* Cadets, *who come down, their arms laden with food*). Put it all on the ground! (*She lays all out on the grass, aided by the two imperturbable lackeys who were behind the carriage.*)

Roxane (*to* Christian, *just as* Cyrano *is drawing him apart.*) Come, make yourself of use! (Christian *comes to help her.* Cyrano's *uneasiness increases.*)

Ragueneau. Truffled peacock!

First Cadet (*radiant, coming down, cutting a big slice of ham*). By the mass! We shall not brave the last hazard without having had a gullet-full!—(*quickly correcting himself on seeing* Roxane)—Pardon! a Balthazar feast!

Ragueneau (*throwing down the carriage cushions*). The cushions are stuffed with ortolans! (*Hubbub. They tear open and turn out the contents of the cushions. Bursts of laughter—merriment.* Ragueneau *throwing down to the* Cadets *bottles of*

red wine.) Flasks of rubies!—(*and white wine*)—Flasks of topaz!

ROXANE (*throwing a folded tablecloth at* CYRANO'S *head*). Unfold me that napkin!—Come, come! be nimble!

RAGUENEAU (*waving a lantern.*) Each of the carriage-lamps is a little larder!

CYRANO (*in a low voice to* CHRISTIAN, *as they arrange the cloth together.*) I must speak with you ere you speak to her.

RAGUENEAU. My whip-handle is an Arles sausage!

ROXANE (*pouring out wine, helping*). Since we are to die, let the rest of the army shift for itself. All for the Gascons! And mark! if De Guiche comes, let no one invite him. (*Going from one to the other.*) There! there! You have time enough! Do not eat too fast!—Drink a little.—Why are you crying?

FIRST CADET. It is all so good! . . .

ROXANE. Tut!—Red or white?—Some bread for Monsieur de Carbon!—a knife. Pass your plate!—a little of the crust? Some more? Let me help you!—Some champagne?—A wing?

CYRANO (*who follows her, his arms laden with dishes, helping her to wait on everybody*). How I worship her!

ROXANE (*going up to* CHRISTIAN). What will you?

CHRISTIAN. Nothing.

ROXANE. Nay, nay, take this biscuit, steeped in muscat! come! . . . but two drops!

CHRISTIAN (*trying to detain her*). Oh! tell me why you came?

ROXANE. Wait; my first duty is to these poor fellows—Hush! In a few minutes . . .

LE BRET (*who had gone up to pass a loaf on the end of a lance to the sentry on the rampart*). De Guiche!

CYRANO. Quick! hide flasks, plates, pie-dishes, game-baskets! Hurry!—Let us all look unconscious! (*to* RAGUENEAU.) Up on your seat!—Is everything covered up?

[*In an instant all has been pushed into the tents, or hidden under doublets, cloaks, and beavers.* DE GUICHE *enters hurriedly—stops suddenly, sniffing the air. Silence.*

DE GUICHE. It smells good here.

A CADET (*humming*). Lo! lo-lo!

DE GUICHE (*looking at him*). What is the matter?—You are very red!

THE CADET. The matter?—Nothing!—'Tis my blood—boiling at the thought of the coming battle!

ANOTHER. Poum, poum—poum . . .

DE GUICHE (*turning round*). What's that?

THE CADET (*slightly drunk*). Nothing! . . . 'Tis a song!—a little . . .

DE GUICHE. You are merry, my friend!

THE CADET. The approach of danger is intoxicating!

DE GUICHE (*calling* CARBON DE CASTEL-JALOUX, *to give him an order*). Captain! . . . (*He stops short on seeing him.*) Plague take me! but you look bravely, too!

CARBON (*crimson in the face, hiding a bottle behind his back, with an evasive movement*). Oh! . . .

DE GUICHE. I have one cannon left, and have had it carried there—(*he points behind the scenes*)—in that corner . . . Your men can use it in case of need.

A CADET (*reeling slightly*). Charming attention!

ANOTHER (*with a gracious smile*). Kind solicitude!

DE GUICHE. How? they are all gone crazy? (*Drily*). As you are not used to cannon, beware of the recoil!

FIRST CADET. Pooh!

DE GUICHE (*furious, going up to him*). But . . .

THE CADET. Gascon cannons never recoil!

DE GUICHE (*taking him by the arm and shaking him*). You are tipsy!—but what with?

THE CADET (*grandiloquently*). —With the smell of powder!

DE GUICHE (*shrugging his shoulders and pushing him away, then going quickly to* ROXANE). Briefly, Madam, what decision do you deign to take?

ROXANE. I stay here.

DE GUICHE. You must fly!

ROXANE. No! I will stay.

DE GUICHE. Since things are thus, give me a musket, one of you!

CARBON. Wherefore?

DE GUICHE. Because I too—mean to remain.

CYRANO. At last! This is true valor, Sir!

FIRST CADET. Then you are Gascon after all, spite of your lace collar?

ROXANE. What is all this?

DE GUICHE. I leave no woman in peril.

SECOND CADET (*to the* FIRST). Hark you! Think you not we might give him something to eat? (*All the viands reappear as if by magic.*)

DE GUICHE (*whose eyes sparkle*). Victuals!

THE THIRD CADET. Yes, you'll see them coming from under every coat!

DE GUICHE (*controlling himself, haughtily*). Do you think I will eat your leavings?

CYRANO (*saluting him*). You make progress.

DE GUICHE (*proudly, with a light touch of accent on the word "breaking"*). I will fight without br-r-eaking my fast!

FIRST CADET (*wild with delight*). Br-r-r'eaking! He has got the accent!

DE GUICHE (*laughing*). I?

THE CADET. 'Tis a Gascon! (*All begin to dance.*)

CARBON DE CASTEL-JALOUX (*who had disappeared behind the rampart, reappearing in the ridge*). I have drawn my pikemen up in line. They are a resolute troop. (*He points to a row of pikes, the tops of which are seen over the ridge.*)

DE GUICHE (*bowing to* ROXANE). Will you accept my hand, and accompany me while I review them? (*She takes it, and they go up toward the rampart. All uncover and follow them.*)

CHRISTIAN (*going to* CYRANO, *eagerly*). Tell me quickly! (*As* ROXANE *appears on the ridge, the tops of the lances disappear, lowered for the salute, and a shout is raised. She bows.*)

THE PIKEMEN (*outside*). *Vivat!*

CHRISTIAN. What is this secret?

CYRANO. If Roxane should . . .

CHRISTIAN. Should? . . .

CYRANO. Speak of the letters? . . .

CHRISTIAN. Yes! I know! . . .

CYRANO. Do not spoil all by seeming surprised . . .

CHRISTIAN. At what?

CYRANO. I must explain to you! . . . Oh! 'tis no great matter—I but thought of it to-day on seeing her. You have . . .

CHRISTIAN. Tell quickly!

CYRANO. You have . . . written to her oftener than you think . . .

CHRISTIAN. How so?

CYRANO. Thus, 'faith! I had taken it in hand to express your flame for you! . . . At times I wrote without saying, "I am writing!"

CHRISTIAN. Ah! . . .

CYRANO. 'Tis simple enough!

CHRISTIAN. But how did you contrive, since we have been cut off, thus . . . to? . . .

CYRANO. . . . Oh! before dawn . . . I was able to get through . . .

CHRISTIAN (*folding his arms*). That was simple, too? And how oft, pray you, have I written? . . . Twice in the week? . . . Three times? . . . Four? . . .

CYRANO. More often still.
CHRISTIAN. What! Every day?
CYRANO. Yes, every day,—twice.
CHRISTIAN (*violently*). And that became so mad a joy for you, that you braved death . . .
CYRANO (*seeing* ROXANE *returning*). Hush! Not before her! (*He goes hurriedly into his tent.*)
ROXANE (*running up to* CHRISTIAN). Ah, Christian, at last! . . .
CHRISTIAN (*taking her hands*). Now tell me why—
Why, by these fearful paths so perilous—
Across these ranks of ribald soldiery,
You have come?
ROXANE. Love, your letters brought me here!
CHRISTIAN. What say you?
ROXANE. 'Tis your fault if I ran risks!
Your letters turned my head! Ah! all this month,
How many!—and the last one ever bettered
The one that went before!
CHRISTIAN. What!—for a few
Inconsequent love-letters!
ROXANE. Hold your peace!
Ah! you cannot conceive it! Ever since
That night, when in a voice all new to me,
Under my window you revealed your soul—
Ah! ever since I have adored you! Now
Your letters all this whole month long!—meseemed
As if I heard that voice so tender, true,
Sheltering, close! Thy fault, I say! It drew me,
The voice o' th' night! Oh! wise Penelope
Would ne'er have stayed to broider on her hearthstone,
If her Ulysses could have writ such letters!
But would have cast away her silken bobbins,
And fled to join him, mad for love as Helen!
CHRISTIAN. But . . .
ROXANE. I read, read again—grew faint for love;
I was thine utterly. Each separate page
Was like a fluttering flower-petal, loosed
From your own soul, and wafted thus to mine.
Imprinted in each burning word was love
Sincere, all-powerful . . .
CHRISTIAN. A love sincere!
Can that be felt, Roxane?
ROXANE. Ay, that it can!

CHRISTIAN. You come . . .?
ROXANE. O Christian, my true lord, I come—
(Were I to throw myself, here, at your knees,
You would raise me—but 'tis my soul I lay
At your feet—you can raise it nevermore!)
—I come to crave your pardon. (Ay, 'tis time
To sue for pardon, now that death may come!)
For the insult done to you when, frivolous,
At first I loved you only for your face!
CHRISTIAN (*horror-stricken*). Roxane!
ROXANE. And later, love—less frivolous—
Like a bird that spreads its wings, but can not fly—
Arrested by your beauty, by your soul
Drawn close—I loved for both at once!
CHRISTIAN. And now?
Ah! you yourself have triumphed o'er yourself,
And now, I love you only for your soul!
CHRISTIAN (*stepping backward*). Roxane!
ROXANE. Be happy. To be loved for beauty—
A poor disguise that time so soon wears threadbare—
Must be to noble souls—to souls aspiring—
A torture. Your dear thoughts have now effacèd
That beauty that so won me at the outset.
Now I see clearer—and I no more see it!
CHRISTIAN. Oh! . . .
ROXANE. You are doubtful of such victory?
CHRISTIAN (*pained*). Roxane!
ROXANE. I see you cannot yet believe it.
Such love . . .?
CHRISTIAN. I do not ask such love as that!
I would be loved more simply; for . . .
ROXANE. For that
Which they have all in turns loved in thee?—Shame!
Oh! be loved henceforth in a better way!
CHRISTIAN. No! the first love was best!
ROXANE. Ah! how you err!
'Tis now that I love best—love well! 'Tis that
Which is thy true self, see!—that I adore!
Were your brilliance dimmed . . .
CHRISTIAN. Hush!
ROXANE. I should love still!
Ay, if your beauty should to-day depart . . .
CHRISTIAN. Say not so!

ROXANE. Ay, I say it!
CHRISTIAN. Ugly? How?
ROXANE. Ugly! I swear I'd love you still!
CHRISTIAN. My God!
ROXANE. Are you content at last?
CHRISTIAN (*in a choked voice*). Ay! . . .
ROXANE. What is wrong?
CHRISTIAN (*gently pushing her away*). Nothing . . . I have two words to say:—one second . . .
ROXANE. But? . . .
CHRISTIAN (*pointing to the* CADETS). Those poor fellows, shortly doomed to death,—
My love deprives them of the sight of you:
Go,—speak to them—smile on them ere they die!
ROXANE (*deeply affected*). Dear Christian! . . . (*She goes up to* CADETS, *who respectfully crowd round her.*)
CHRISTIAN (*calling toward* CYRANO'S *tent*). Cyrano!
CYRANO (*reappearing, fully armed*). What? Why so pale?
CHRISTIAN. She does not love me!
CYRANO. What?
CHRISTIAN. 'Tis you she loves!
CYRANO. No!
CHRISTIAN. —For she loves me only for my soul!
CYRANO. Truly?
CHRISTIAN. Yes! Thus—you see, that soul is you, . . .
Therefore, 'tis you she loves!—And you—love her!
CYRANO. I?
CHRISTIAN. Oh, I know it!
CYRANO. Ay, 'tis true!
CHRISTIAN. You love
To madness!
CYRANO. Ay! and worse!
CHRISTIAN. Then tell her so!
CYRANO. No!
CHRISTIAN. And why not?
CYRANO. Look at my face!—be answered!
CHRISTIAN. She'd love me—were I ugly.
CYRANO. Said she so?
CHRISTIAN. Ay! in those words!
CYRANO. I'm glad she told you that!
But pooh!—believe it not! I am well pleased
She thought to tell you. Take it not for truth.
Never grow ugly:—she'd reproach me then!

CHRISTIAN. That I intend discovering!
CYRANO. No! I beg!
CHRISTIAN. Ay, she shall choose between us!—Tell her all!
CYRANO. No! no! I will not have it! Spare me this!
CHRISTIAN. Because my face is haply fair, shall I
Destroy your happiness? 'Twere too unjust!
CYRANO. And I,—because by Nature's freak I have
The gift to say—all that perchance you feel,
Shall I be fatal to your happiness?
CHRISTIAN. Tell all!
CYRANO. It is ill done to tempt me thus!
CHRISTIAN. Too long I've borne about within myself
A rival to myself—I'll make an end!
CYRANO. Christian!
CHRISTIAN. Our union, without witness—secret—
Clandestine—can be easily dissolved.
If we survive.
CYRANO. My God!—he still persists!
CHRISTIAN. I will be loved myself—or not at all!
—I'll go see what they do—there, at the end
Of the post: speak to her, and then let her choose
One of us two!
CYRANO. It will be you!
CHRISTIAN. Pray God! (*He calls.*)
Roxane!
CYRANO. No! no!
ROXANE (*coming up quickly*). What?
CHRISTIAN. Cyrano has things
Important for your ear . . . (*She hastens to* CYRANO. CHRISTIAN *goes out.*)
ROXANE. Important, how?
CYRANO (*in despair. To* ROXANE). He's gone! 'Tis naught!—Oh, you know how he sees
Importance in a trifle!
ROXANE (*warmly*). Did he doubt
Of what I said?—Ah, yes, I saw he doubted!
CYRANO (*taking her hand*). But are you sure you told him all the truth?
ROXANE. Yes, I would love him were he . . . (*She hesitates.*)
CYRANO. Does that word
Embarrass you before my face, Roxane?
ROXANE. I . . .

CYRANO (*smiling sadly*). 'Twill not hurt me! Say it! If he were Ugly! . . .

ROXANE. Yes, ugly! (*Musket report outside.*) Hark! I hear a shot!

CYRANO (*ardently*). Hideous!

ROXANE. Hideous! yes!

CYRANO. Disfigured.

ROXANE. Ay!

CYRANE. Grotesque?

ROXANE. He could not be grotesque to me!

CYRANO. You'd love the same? . . .

ROXANE. The same—nay, even more!

CYRANO (*losing command over himself—aside*). My God! it's true, perchance, love waits me there!

(*To* ROXANE.) I . . . Roxane . . . listen . . .

LE BRET (*entering hurriedly—to* CYRANO). Cyrano!

CYRANO (*turning round*). What?

LE BRET. Hush! (*He whispers something to him.*)

CYRANO (*letting go* ROXANE'S *hand and exclaiming*). Ah, God!

ROXANE. What is it?

CYRANO (*to himself—stunned*). All is over now. (*Renewed reports.*)

ROXANE. What is the matter? Hark! another shot! (*She goes up to look outside.*)

CYRANO. It is too late, now I can never tell!

ROXANE (*trying to rush out*). What has chanced?

CYRANO (*rushing to stop her*). Nothing!

[*Some* CADETS *enter, trying to hide something they are carrying, and close round it to prevent* ROXANE *approaching.*

ROXANE. And those men?

CYRANO (*drawing her away*).

ROXANE. What were you just about to say before . . .?

CYRANO. What was I saying? Nothing now, I swear! (*Solemnly.*) I swear that Christian's soul, his nature, were . . . (*Hastily correcting himself.*)

Nay, that they are, the noblest, greatest . . .

ROXANE. Were? (*With a loud scream.*)

Oh! (*She rushes up, pushing every one aside.*)

CYRANO. All is over now!

ROXANE (*seeing* CHRISTIAN *lying on the ground, wrapped in his cloak*). O Christian!

LE BRET (*to* CYRANO). Struck by first shot of the enemy!

[ROXANE *flings herself down by* CHRISTIAN. *Fresh reports of cannon—clash of arms—clamor—beating of drums.*

CARBON (*with sword in the air*). O come! Your muskets. (*Followed by the* CADETS, *he passes to the other side of the ramparts.*)

ROXANE. Christian!

THE VOICE OF CARBON (*from the other side*). Ho! make haste!

ROXANE. Christian!

CARBON. *Form line!*

ROXANE. Christian!

CARBON. *Handle your match!* (RAGUENEAU *rushes up, bringing water in a helmet.*)

CHRISTIAN (*in a dying voice*). Roxane!

CYRANO (*quickly, whispering into* CHRISTIAN'S *ear, while* ROXANE *distractedly tears a piece of linen from his breast, which she dips into the water, trying to stanch the bleeding.*) I told her all. She loves you still. (CHRISTIAN *closes his eyes.*)

ROXANE. How, my sweet love?

CARBON. *Draw ramrods!*

ROXANE (*to* CYRANO). He is not dead?

CARBON. *Open your charges with your teeth!*

ROXANE. His cheek
Grows cold against my own!

CARBON. *Ready! Present!*

ROXANE (*seeing a letter in* CHRISTIAN'S *doublet*). A letter! . . .
'Tis for me! (*She opens it.*)

CYRANO (*aside*). My letter!

CARBON. *Fire!* (*Musket reports—shouts—noise of battle.*)

CYRANO (*trying to disengage his hand, which* ROXANE *on her knees is holding*). But, Roxane, hark, they fight!

ROXANE (*detaining him*). Stay yet awhile.
For he is dead. You knew him, you alone. (*Weeping quietly.*)
Ah, was not his a beauteous soul, a soul
Wondrous!

CYRANO (*standing up—bareheaded*). Ay, Roxane.

ROXANE. An inspired poet?

CYRANO. Ay, Roxane.

ROXANE. And a mind sublime?

CYRANO. Oh, yes!

ROXANE. A heart too deep for common minds to plumb,
A spirit subtle, charming?

CYRANO (*firmly*). Ay, Roxane.

ROXANE (*flinging herself on the dead body*). Dead, my love!

CYRANO (*aside—drawing his sword*). Ay, and let me die to-day,
Since, all unconscious, she mourns me—in him! (*Sounds of trumpets in the distance.*)

DE GUICHE (*appearing on the ramparts—bareheaded—with a wound on his forehead—in a voice of thunder*). It is the signal! Trumpet flourishes!
The French bring the provisions into camp!
Hold but the place awhile!

ROXANE. See, there is blood
Upon the letter—tears!

A VOICE (*outside—shouting*). Surrender!

VOICE OF CADETS. No!

RAGUENEAU (*standing on the top of his carriage, watches the battle over the edge of the ramparts*). The danger's ever greater!

CYRANO (*to* DE GUICHE—*pointing to* ROXANE). I will charge!
Take her away!

ROXANE (*kissing the letter—in a half-extinguished voice*). O God! his tears! his blood! . . .

RAGUENEAU (*jumping down from the carriage and rushing toward her*). She's swooned away!

DE GUICHE (*on the rampart—to the* CADETS—*with fury*). Stand fast!

A VOICE (*outside*). Lay down your arms!

THE CADETS. No!

CYRANO (*to* DE GUICHE). Now that you have proved your valor, Sir, (*pointing to* ROXANE)
Fly, and save her!

DE GUICHE (*rushing to* ROXANE, *and carrying her away in his arms*). So be it! Gain but time,
The victory's ours!

CYRANO. Good. (*Calling out to* ROXANE, *whom* DE GUICHE, *aided by* RAGUENEAU, *is bearing away in a fainting condition.*)
Farewell, Roxane!
[*Tumult. Shouts.* CADETS *reappear, wounded, falling on the scene.* CYRANO, *rushing to the battle, is stopped by* CARBON DE CASTEL-JALOUX, *who is streaming with blood.*

CARBON. We are breaking! I am wounded—wounded twice!

CYRANO (*shouting to the* GASCONS). *Gascons! Ho, Gascons! Never turn your backs!* (*To* CARBON, *whom he is supporting.*)
Have no fear! I have two deaths to avenge:

My friend who's slain;—and my dead happiness! (*They come down,* CYRANO *brandishing the lance to which is attached* ROXANE'S *handkerchief.*)

Float there! laced kerchief broidered with her name! (*He sticks it in the ground and shouts to the* CADETS.)

Fall on them, Gascons! Crush them!

(*To the* FIFER.) Fifer, play!

[*The fife plays. The wounded try to rise. Some* CADETS, *falling one over the other down the slope, group themselves round* CYRANO *and the little flag. The carriage is crowded with men inside and outside, and, bristling with arquebuses, is turned into a fortress.*

A CADET (*appearing on the crest, beaten backward, but still fighting, cries*). They're climbing the redoubt! (*and falls dead.*)

CYRANO. Let us salute them! (*The rampart is covered instantly by a formidable row of enemies. The standards of the Imperialists are raised.*)

Fire! (*General discharge.*)

A CRY IN THE ENEMY'S RANKS. Fire! (*A deadly answering volley. The* CADETS *fall on all sides.*)

A SPANISH OFFICER (*uncovering*). Who are these men who rush on death?

CYRANO (*reciting, erect, amid a storm of bullets*). The bold Cadets of Gascony,

Of Carbon of Castel-Jaloux!

Brawling, swaggering boastfully, (*He rushes, forward, followed by a few survivors.*)

The bold Cadets . . . (*His voice is drowned in the battle.*)

(*Curtain.*)

ACT V

CYRANO'S GAZETTE.

Fifteen years later, in 1655. Park of the Sisters of the Holy Cross in Paris. Magnificent trees. On the left the house: broad steps on to which open several doors. An enormous plane tree in the middle of the stage, standing alone. On the right, among big boxwood trees, a semi-circular stone bench.

The whole background of the stage is crossed by an alley of chestnut trees leading on the right hand to the door of a chapel seen through the branches. Through the double row of trees of this

alley are seen lawns, other alleys, clusters of trees, winding of the park, the sky.

The chapel opens by a little side door on to a colonnade which is wreathed with autumn leaves, and is lost to view a little farther on in the right-hand foreground behind the boxwood.

It is autumn. All the foliage is red against the fresh green of the lawns. The green boxwood and yews stand out dark.

Under each tree a patch of yellow leaves.

The stage is strewn with dead leaves, which rustle under foot in the alleys, and half cover the steps and benches.

Between the benches on the right hand and the tree a large embroidery frame, in front of which a little chair has been set.

Baskets full of skeins and balls of wool. A tapestry begun.

At the rising of the curtains nuns are walking to and fro in the park; some are seated on the bench around an older Sister.

The leaves are falling.

MOTHER MARGUERITE, SISTER MARTHA, SISTER CLAIRE, *other* SISTERS.

SISTER MARTHA (*to* MOTHER MARGUERITE). Sister Claire glanced in the mirror, once—nay, twice, to see if her coif suited.

MOTHER MARGUERITE (*to* SISTER CLAIRE). 'Tis not well.

SISTER CLAIRE. But I saw Sister Martha take a plum out of the tart.

MOTHER MARGUERITE (*to* SISTER MARTHA). That was ill done, my sister.

SISTER CLAIRE. A little glance!

SISTER MARTHA. And such a little plum!

MOTHER MARGUERITE. I shall tell this to Monsieur Cyrano.

SISTER CLAIRE. Nay, prithee do not!—he will mock!

SISTER MARTHA. He'll say
We nuns are vain!

SISTER CLAIRE. And greedy!

MOTHER MARGUERITE (*smiling*). Ay, and kind!

SISTER CLAIRE. Is it not true, pray, Mother Marguerite,
That he has come, each week, on Saturday
For ten years, to the convent?

MOTHER MARGUERITE. Ay! and more!
Even since—fourteen years ago—the day
His cousin brought here, 'midst our woolen coifs,
The worldly mourning of her widow's veil,
Like a blackbird's wing among the convent doves!

SISTER MARTHA. He only has the skill to turn her mind
From grief—unsoftened yet by Time—unhealed!
ALL THE SISTERS. He is so droll!—It's cheerful when he comes!—
He teases us!—But we all like him well!—
—We make him pasties of angelica!
SISTER MARTHA. But, he is not a faithful Catholic!
SISTER CLAIRE. We will convert him!
THE SISTERS. Yes! Yes!
MOTHER MARGUERITE. I forbid,
My daughters, you attempt that subject. Nay,
Weary him not—he might less oft come here!
SISTER MARTHA. But . . . God . . .
MOTHER MARGUERITE. Nay, never fear! God knows him well!
SISTER MARTHA. But—every Saturday, when he arrives,
He tells me, "Sister, I eat meat on Friday!"
MOTHER MARGUERITE. Ah! says he so? Well, the last time he came
Food had not passed his lips for two whole days!
SISTER MARTHA. Mother!
MOTHER MARGUERITE. He's poor.
SISTER MARTHA. Who told you so, dear Mother?
MOTHER MARGUERITE. Monsieur le Bret.
SISTER MARTHA. None help him?
MOTHER MARGUERITE. He permits not.

[*In an alley at the back* ROXANE *appears, dressed in black, with a widow's coif and veil.* DE GUICHE, *imposing-looking and visibly aged, walks by her side. They saunter slowly.* MOTHER MARGUERITE *rises.*

'Tis time we go in; Madame Madeleine
Walks in the garden with a visitor.
SISTER MARTHA (*to* SISTER CLAIRE, *in a low voice*). The Marshal of Grammont?
SISTER CLAIRE (*looking at him*). 'Tis he, I think.
SISTER MARTHA. 'Tis many months now since he came to see her.
THE SISTERS. He is so busy!—The Court,—the camp! . . .
SISTER CLAIRE. The world! (*They go out.* DE GUICHE *and* ROXANE *come forward in silence, and stop close to the embroidery frame.*)
THE DUKE. And you stay here still—ever vainly fair,
Ever in weeds?
ROXANE. Ever.
THE DUKE. Still faithful?
ROXANE. Still.
THE DUKE (*after a pause*). Am I forgiven?

ROXANE. Ay, since I am here. (*Another pause.*)
THE DUKE. His was a soul, you say? . . .
ROXANE. Ah!—when you knew him!
THE DUKE. Ah, may be! . . . I, perchance, too little knew him!
. . . And his last letter, ever next your heart?
ROXANE. Hung from this chain, a gentle scapulary.
THE DUKE. And, dead, you love him still?
ROXANE. At times,—meseems
He is but partly dead—our hearts still speak,
As if his love, still living, wrapped me round!
THE DUKE (*after another pause*). Cyrano comes to see you?
ROXANE. Often, ay.
Dear, kind old friend! We call him my "Gazette."
He never fails to come: beneath this tree
They place his chair, if it be fine:—I wait,
I broider;—the clock strikes;—at the last stroke
I hear,—for now I never turn to look—
Too sure to hear his cane tap down the steps;
He seats himself:—with gentle raillery
He mocks my tapestry that's never done;
He tells me all the gossip of the week . . . (LE BRET *appears on the steps.*)
Why, here's Le Bret! (LE BRET *descends.*)
How goes it with our friend?
LE BRET. Ill!—very ill.
THE DUKE. How?
ROXANE (*to the* DUKE). He exaggerates!
LE BRET. All that I prophesied: Desertion, want! . . .
His letters now make him fresh enemies!—
Attacking the sham nobles, sham devout,
Sham brave,—the thieving authors,—all the world!
ROXANE. Ah! but his sword still holds them all in check;
None get the better of him.
THE DUKE (*shaking his head*). Time will show!
LE BRET. Ah, but I fear for him—not man's attack,—
Solitude—hunger—cold December days,
That wolf-like steal into his chamber drear:—
Lo! the assassins that I fear for him!
Each day he tightens by one hole his belt:
That poor nose—tinted like old ivory:
He has retained one shabby suit of serge.
THE DUKE. Ay, there is one who has no prize of Fortune!—
Yet is not to be pitied!

LE BRET (*with a bitter smile*). My Lord Marshal! . . .
THE DUKE. Pity him not! He has lived out his vows,
Free in his thoughts, as in his actions free!
LE BRET (*in the same tone*). My Lord! . . .
THE DUKE (*haughtily*). True! I have all, and he has naught; . . .
Yet I were proud to take his hand!
(*Bowing to* ROXANE). Adieu!
ROXANE. I go with you. (*The* DUKE *bows to* LE BRET, *and goes with* ROXANE *toward the steps.*)
THE DUKE (*pausing, while she goes up*). Ay, true—I envy him.
Look you, when life is brimful of success
—Though the past hold no action foul—one feels
A thousand self-disgusts, of which the sum
Is not remorse, but a dim, vague unrest;
And, as one mounts the steps of worldly fame,
The Duke's furred mantles trail within their folds
A sound of dead illusions, vain regrets,
A rustle—scarce a whisper—like as when,
Mounting the terrace steps, your mourning robe
Sweeps in its train the dying autumn leaves.
ROXANE (*ironically*). You are pensive?
THE DUKE. True! I am! (*As he is going out, suddenly*).
Monsieur Le Bret!
(*To* ROXANE). A word, with your permission? (*He goes to* LE BRET, *and in a low voice.*)
True, that none
Dare to attack your friend;—but many hate him;
Yesterday, at the Queen's card-play, 'twas said
"That Cyrano may die—by accident!"
Let him stay in—be prudent!
LE BRET (*raising his arms to heaven*). Prudent! He! . . .
He's coming here. I'll warn him—but! . . .
ROXANE (*who has stayed on the steps, to a* SISTER *who comes toward her*). What is it?
THE SISTER. Ragueneau would see you, Madame.
ROXANE. Let him come. (*To the* DUKE *and* LE BRET.)
He comes to tell his troubles. Having been
An author (save the mark!)—poor fellow—now
By turns he's singer . . .
LE BRET. Bathing-man . . .
ROXANE. Then actor . . .
LE BRET. Beadle . . .
ROXANE. Wig-maker . . .

LE BRET. Teacher of the lute . . .
ROXANE. What will he be to-day, by chance?
RAGUENEAU (*entering hurriedly*). Ah! Madame!
(*He sees* LE BRET.) Ah! you here, Sir!
ROXANE (*smiling*). Tell all your miseries
To him: I will return anon.
RAGUENEAU. But, Madame . . . (ROXANE *goes out with the* DUKE. *He goes toward* LE BRET.)
Since you are here, 'tis best she should not know!
I was going to your friend just now—was but
A few steps from the house, when I saw him
Go out. I hurried to him. Saw him turn
The corner . . . suddenly, from out a window
Where he was passing—was it chance? . . . may be!
A lackey let fall a large piece of wood.
LE BRET. Cowards! O Cyrano!
RAGUENEAU. I ran—I saw . . .
LE BRET. 'Tis hideous!
RAGUENEAU. Saw our poet, Sir—our friend—
Struck to the ground—a large wound in his head!
LE BRET. He's dead?
RAGUENEAU. No—but—I bore him to his room . . .
Ah! his room! What a thing to see!—that garret!
LE BRET. He suffers?
RAGUENEAU. No; his consciousness has flown.
LE BRET. Saw you a doctor?
RAGUENEAU. One was kind—he came.
LE BRET. My poor Cyrano!—We must not tell this
To Roxane suddenly.—What said this leech?—
RAGUENEAU. Said,—what, I know not—fever, meningitis!—
Ah! could you see him—all his head bound up!—
But let us haste!—There's no one by his bed!—
And if he try to rise, Sir, he might die!
RAGUENEAU (*dragging him toward the right*). Come! Through the chapel! 'Tis the quickest way!
ROXANE (*appearing on the steps, and seeing* LE BRET *go away by the colonnade leading to the chapel door*). Monsieur Le Bret! (LE BRET *and* RAGUENEAU *disappear without answering.*)
Le Bret goes—when I call!
'Tis some new trouble of good Ragueneau's. (*She descends the steps.*)

ROXANE. Ah! what a beauty in September's close!
My sorrow's eased. April's joy dazzled it,
But autumn wins it with her dying calm.
[*She seats herself at the embroidery frame. Two* SISTERS *come out of the house, and bring a large armchair under the tree.*
There comes the famous armchair where he sits,
Dear faithful friend!
SISTER MARTHA. It is the parlor's best!
ROXANE. Thanks, sister.
(*The* SISTERS *go.*) He'll be here now.
(*She seats herself. A clock strikes.*) The hour strikes.
—My silks?—Why, now, the hour's struck! How strange
To be behind his time, at last, to-day!
Perhaps the portress—where's my thimble? . . .
Here!—Is preaching to him. (*A pause.*)
Yes, she must be preaching!
Surely he must come soon!—Ah, a dead leaf!— (*She brushes off the leaf from her work.*)
Nothing, besides, could—scissors?—In my bag!
—Could hinder him . . .
A SISTER (*coming to the steps*). Monsieur de Bergerac.
ROXANE (*without turning round*). What was I saying? . . .
[*She embroiders.* CYRANO, *very pale, his hat pulled down over his eyes, appears. The* SISTER *who had announced him retires. He descends the steps slowly, with a visible difficulty in holding himself upright, bearing heavily on his cane.* ROXANE *still works at her tapestry.*
Time has dimmed the tints . . .
How harmonize them now?
(*To* CYRANO, *with playful reproach*). For the first time
Late!—For the first time, all these fourteen years!
CYRANO (*who has succeeded in reaching the chair, and has seated himself—in a lively voice, which is in great contrast with his pale face*). Ay! It is villainous! I raged—was stayed . . .
ROXANE. By? . . .
CYRANO. By a bold, unwelcome visitor.
ROXANE (*absently, working*). Some creditor?
CYRANO. Ay, cousin,—the last creditor
Who has a debt to claim from me.

ROXANE. And you have paid it?

CYRANO. No, not yet! I put it off;
—Said, "Cry you mercy; this is Saturday,
When I have got a standing rendezvous
That naught defers. Call in an hour's time!"

ROXANE (*carelessly*). Oh, well, a creditor can always wait!
I shall not let you go ere twilight falls.

CYRANO. Haply, perforce, I quit you ere it falls! (*He shuts his eyes, and is silent for a moment.* SISTER MARTHA *crosses the park from the chapel to the flight of steps.* ROXANE, *seeing her, signs to her to approach.*)

ROXANE (*to* CYRANO). How now? You have not teased the Sister?

CYRANO (*hastily opening his eyes*). True! (*In a comically loud voice.*)
Sister! come here! (*The* SISTER *glides up to him.*)
Ha! ha! What? Those bright eyes
Bent ever on the ground?

SISTER MARTHA (*who makes a movement of astonishment on seeing his face*). Oh!

CYRANO (*in a whisper, pointing to* ROXANE). Hush! 'its naught!—
(*Loudly, in a blustering voice*). I broke fast yesterday!

SISTER MARTHA (*aside*). I know, I know!
That's how he is so pale! Come presently
To the refectory, I'll make you drink
A famous bowl of soup . . . You'll come?

CYRANO. Ay, ay!

SISTER MARTHA. There, see! You are more reasonable to-day!

ROXANE (*who hears them whispering*). The Sister would convert you?

SISTER MARTHA. Nay, not I!

CYRANO. Hold! but it's true! You preach to me no more,
You, once so glib with holy words! I am
Astonished! . . .(*With burlesque fury.*)
Stay, I will surprise you too!
Hark! I permit you . . . (*He pretends to be seeking for something to tease her with, and to have found it.*)
. . . It is something new!—
To—pray for me, to-night, at chapel-time!

ROXANE. Oh! oh!

CYRANO (*laughing*). Good Sister Martha is struck dumb!

SISTER MARTHA (*gently*). I did not wait your leave to pray for you. (*She goes out.*)

CYRANO (*turning to* ROXANE, *who is still bending over her work*).
That tapestry! Beshrew me if my eyes
Will ever see it finished!
ROXANE. I was sure
To hear that well-known jest! (*A light breeze causes the leaves to fall.*)
CYRANO. The autumn leaves!
ROXANE (*lifting her head, and looking down the distant alley*).
Soft golden brown, like a Venetian's hair.
—See how they fall!
CYRANO. Ay, see how brave they fall,
In their last journey downward from the bough,
To rot within the clay; yet, lovely still,
Hiding the horror of the last decay,
With all the wayward grace of careless flight!
ROXANE. What, melancholy—you?
CYRANO (*collecting himself*). Nay, nay, Roxane!
ROXANE. Then let the dead leaves fall the way they will . . .
And chat. What, have you nothing new to tell,
My Court Gazette?
CYRANO. Listen.
ROXANE. Ah!
CYRANO (*growing whiter and whiter*). Saturday
The nineteenth: having eaten to excess
Of pear-conserve, the King felt feverish;
The lancet quelled this treasonable revolt,
And the august pulse beats at normal pace.
At the Queen's ball on Sunday thirty score
Of best white waxen tapers were consumed.
Our troops, they say, have chased the Austrians.
Four sorcerers were hanged. The little dog
Of Madame d'Athis took a dose . . .
ROXANE. I bid
You hold your tongue, Monsieur de Bergerac!
CYRANO. Monday—not much—Claire changed protector.
ROXANE. Oh!
CYRANO (*whose face changes more and more*). Tuesday, the Court repaired to Fontainebleau.
Wednesday, the Montglat said to Comte de Fiesque . . .
No! Thursday—Mancini, Queen of France! (*almost!*)
Friday, the Montglat to Count Fiesque said—"Yes!"
And Saturday the twenty-sixth . . . (*He closes his eyes. His head falls forward. Silence.*)

ROXANE (*surprised at his voice ceasing, turns round, looks at him, and rising, terrified*). He swoons!
(*She runs toward him crying.*) Cyrano!

CYRANO (*opening his eyes, in an unconcerned voice*). What is this?
(*He sees* ROXANE *bending over him, and, hastily pressing his hat on his head, and shrinking back in his chair.*) Nay, on my word
'Tis nothing! Let me be!

ROXANE. But . . .

CYRANO. That old wound
Of Arras, sometimes,—as you know . . .

ROXANE. Dear friend!

CYRANO. 'Tis nothing, 'twill pass soon; (*He smiles with an effort.*)
See!—it has passed!

ROXANE. Each of us has his wound; ay, I have mine,—
Never healed up—not healed yet, my old wound! (*She puts her hand on her breast.*)
'Tis here, beneath this letter brown with age,
All stained with tear-drops, and still stained with blood. (*Twilight begins to fall.*)

CYRANO. His letter! Ah! you promised me one day
That I should read it.

ROXANE. What would you?—His letter?

CYRANO. Yes, I would fain,—to-day . . .

ROXANE (*giving the bag hung at her neck*). See! here it is!

CYRANO (*taking it*). Have I your leave to open?

ROXANE. Open—read! (*She comes back to her tapestry frame, folds it up, sorts her wools*).

CYRANO (*reading*). "Roxane, adieu! I soon must die!
This very night, belovèd; and I
Feel my soul heavy with love untold.
I die! No more, as in days of old,
My loving, longing eyes will feast
On your least gesture—ay, the least!
I mind me the way you touch your cheek
With your finger, softly, as you speak!
Ah me! I know that gesture well!
My heart cries out!—I cry 'Farewell'!"

ROXANE. But how you read that letter! One would think . . .

CYRANO (*continuing to read*). "My life, my love, my jewel, my sweet,
My heart has been yours in every beat!" (*The shades of evening fall imperceptibly.*)

ROXANE. You read in such a voice—so strange—and yet—
It is not the first time I hear that voice! (*She comes nearer very softly, without his perceiving it, passes behind his chair, and, noiselessly leaning over him, looks at the letter. The darkness deepens.*)
CYRANO. "Here, dying, and there, in the land on high,
I am he who loved, who loves you,—I . . ."
ROXANE (*putting her hand on his shoulder*). How can you read?
It is too dark to see! (*He starts, turns, sees her close to him. Suddenly alarmed, he holds his head down. Then in the dusk, which has now completely enfolded them, she says, very slowly, with clasped hands.*)
And, fourteen years long, he has played this part
Of the kind old friend who comes to laugh and chat.
CYRANO. Roxane!
ROXANE. 'Twas you!
CYRANO. No, never; Roxane, no!
ROXANE. I should have guessed, each time he said my name!
CYRANO. No; it was not I!
ROXANE. It was you!
CYRANO. I swear!
ROXANE. I see through all the generous counterfeit—
The letters—you!
CYRANO. No.
ROXANE. The sweet, mad love-words! You!
CYRANO. No!
ROXANE. The voice that thrilled the night—you, you!
CYRANO. I swear you err.
ROXANE. The soul—it was your soul!
CYRANO. I loved you not.
ROXANE. You loved me not?
CYRANO. 'Twas he!
ROXANE. You loved me!
CYRANO. No!
ROXANE. See! how you falter now!
CYRANO. No, my sweet love, I never loved you!
ROXANE. Ah!
Things dead, long dead, see! how they rise again!
—Why, why keep silence all these fourteen years,
When, on this letter, which he never wrote,
The tears were your tears?
CYRANO (*holding out the letter to her*). The bloodstains were his.

ROXANE. Why, then, that noble silence,—kept so long—
Broken to-day for the first time—why?
CYRANO. Why? . . . (LE BRET *and* RAGUENEAU *enter running.*)
LE BRET. What madness! Here? I knew it well!
CYRANO (*smiling and sitting up*). What now?
LE BRET. He has brought his death by coming, Madame.
ROXANE. God!
Ah, then, that faintness of a moment since . . .?
CYRANO. Why, true! It interrupted the "Gazette":
. . . Saturday, twenty-sixth, at dinner-time,
Assassination of De Bergerac. (*He takes off his hat; they see his head bandaged.*)
ROXANE. What says he? Cyrano!—His head all bound!
Ah, what has chanced? How?—Who? . . .
CYRANO. "To be struck down,
Pierced by sword i' the heart, from a hero's hand!"
That I had dreamed. O mockery of Fate!
—Killed, I! of all men—in an ambuscade!
Struck from behind, and by a lackey's hand!
'Tis very well. I am foiled, foiled in all,
Even in my death.
RAGUENEAU. Ah, Monsieur! . . .
CYRANO (*holding out his hand to him*). Ragueneau,
Weep not so bitterly! . . . What do you now,
Old comrade?
RAGUENEAU (*amid his tears*). . . . Trim the lights for Molière's stage.
CYRANO. Molière!
RAGUENEAU. Yes; but I shall leave to-morrow.
I cannot bear it!—Yesterday, they played
"Scapin"—I saw he'd thieved a scene from you!
LE BRET. What! a whole scene?
RAGUENEAU. Oh, yes, indeed, Monsieur,
The famous one, "Que Diable allait-il faire?"
LE BRET. Molière has stolen that?
CYRANO. Tut! He did well! . . .
(*To* RAGUENEAU.) How went the scene? It told—I think it told?
RAGUENEAU (*sobbing*). Ah! how they laughed!
CYRANO. Look you, it was my life
To be the prompter every one forgets!
(*To* ROXANE.) That night when 'neath your window Christian spoke

—Under your balcony, you remember? Well!
There was the allegory of my whole life:
I, in the shadow, at the ladder's foot,
While others lightly mount to Love and Fame!
Just! very just! Here on the threshold drear
Of death, I pay my tribute with the rest,
To Molière's genius,—Christian's fair face! (*The chapel-bell chimes. The* NUNS *are seen passing down the alley at the back, to say their office.*)
Let them go pray, go pray, when the bell rings!

ROXANE (*rising and calling*). Sister! Sister!

CYRANO (*holding her fast*). Call no one. Leave me not;
When you come back, I should be gone for aye. (*The* NUNS *have all entered the chapel. The organ sounds.*)
I was somewhat fain for music—hark! 'tis come.

ROXANE. Live, for I love you!

CYRANO. No! In fairy tales
When to the ill-starred Prince the lady says
"I love you!" all his ugliness fades fast—
But I remain the same, up to the last!

ROXANE. I have marred your life—I, I!

CYRANO. You blessed my life!
Never on me had rested woman's love.
My mother even could not find me fair;
I had no sister; and, when grown a man,
I feared the mistress who would mock at me.
But I have had your friendship—grace to you
A woman's charm has passed across my path.

LE BRET (*pointing to the moon, which is seen between the trees*).
Your other lady-love is come.

CYRANO (*smiling*). I see.

ROXANE. I loved but once, yet twice I lose my love!

CYRANO. Hark you, Le Bret! I soon shall reach the moon.
To-night, alone, with no projectile's aid! . . .

LE BRET. What are you saying?

CYRANO. I tell you, it is there,
There, that they send me for my Paradise,
There I shall find at last the souls I love,
In exile,—Galileo—Socrates!

LE BRET (*rebelliously*). No, no! It is too clumsy, too unjust!
So great a heart! So great a poet! Die
Like this? what, die . . .?

CYRANO. Hark to Le Bret, who scolds!

LE BRET (*weeping*). Dear friend . . .
CYRANO (*starting up, his eyes wild*). What ho! Cadets of Gascony!
The elemental mass—ah yes; the *hic* . . .
LE BRET. His science still—he raves!
CYRANO. Copernicus
Said . . .
ROXANE. Oh!
CYRANO. Mais que diable allait-il faire,
Mais que diable allait-il faire dans cette galère? . . .
Philosopher, metaphysician,
Rhymer, brawler, and musician,
Famed for his lunar expedition,
And the unnumbered duels he fought,—
And lover also,—by interposition!—
Here lies Hercule Savinien
De Cyrano de Bergerac,
Who was everything, yet was naught.
I cry you pardon, but I may not stay;
See, the moon-ray that comes to call me hence! (*He has fallen back in his chair; the sobs of* ROXANE *recall him to reality; he looks long at her, and, touching her veil.*)
I would not bid you mourn less faithfully
That good, brave Christian: I could only ask
That when my body shall be cold in clay
You wear those sable mourning weeds for two,
And mourn awhile for me, in mourning him.
ROXANE. I swear it you! . . .
CYRANO (*shivering violently, then suddenly rising*). Not there! what, seated?—no! (*They spring toward him.*)
Let no one hold me up— (*He props himself against the tree.*)
Only the tree! (*Silence.*)
It comes. E'en now my feet have turned to stone,
My hands are gloved with lead! (*He stands erect.*)
But since Death comes,
I meet him still afoot, (*He draws his sword.*)
And sword in hand!
LE BRET. Cyrano!
ROXANE (*half fainting*). Cyrano! (*All shrink back in terror.*)
CYRANO. Why, I well believe
He dares to mock my nose? Ho! insolent! (*He raises his sword.*)
What say you? It is useless? Ay, I know
But who fights ever hoping for success?

I fought for lost cause, and for fruitless quest!
You there, who are you!—You are thousands! Ah!
I know you now, old enemies of mine!
Falsehood! (*He strikes in the air with his sword.*)
Have at you! Ha! and Compromise!
Prejudice, Treachery! . . . (*He strikes.*)
Surrender, I?
Parley? No, never! You too, Folly,—you?
I know that you will lay me low at last;
Let be! Yet I fall fighting, fighting still! (*He makes passes in the air, and stops, breathless.*)
You strip from me the laurel and the rose!
Take all! Despite you there is yet one thing
I hold against you all, and when, to-night,
I enter Christ's fair courts, and, lowly bowed,
Sweep with doffed casque the heavens' threshold blue,
One thing is left, that, void of stain or smutch,
I bear away despite you. (*He springs forward, his sword raised; it falls from his hand; he staggers, falls back into the arms of* Le Bret *and* Ragueneau.)

Roxane (*bending over him and kissing his forehead*). Tis? . . .

Cyrano (*opening his eyes, recognizing her, and smiling*). My *panache.**

(*Curtain.*)

* Plume.

MODERN DRAMA IN GERMANY

THE story of the German drama of the nineteenth century reads very much like the story of English, French, or American drama for that same epoch. If history is any guide, there was a sound reason why, for at least a half-century, drama should have found itself marking time instead of producing masterpieces. That reason lies in the fact that for the first three quarters of the nineteenth century the various nations lacked any settled ideas of the meaning of life as it was being lived in those decades.

The eighteenth century had been a time of emancipation—political and mental. In England that spirit found its best expression in the general acceptance of Liberalism. As Green so happily puts it, before this century was half completed "Englishmen had forgotten that it was possible to persecute for differences of religion, or to put down the the liberty of the press, or to tamper with the administration of justice, or to rule without a parliament." This was the century too in which England, France, and Spain contended for the prizes of America and India; England first gaining North America and later losing it.

In France the surviving abuses of feudalism—a system never firmly established in England, and made quite ineffective by the Wars of Roses, which killed off most of the powerful and quarrelsome nobles—combined with the work of the intellectual revolutionists, brought the nobly-planned era of "Liberty, Equality and Fraternity" to the disaster of the Terror. The fruit of that violence was the reactionary violence of Napoleon. It required from ten to fifty years for European states to recover from the Napoleonic wars.

Wars may arouse national consciousness, but it is in the peace which follows victory that great dramatic literature has flourished. The days of the Bourbons in France, when Racine, Molière, and Corneille produced their great works

are only an apparent exception. These works were not written for the French public, but for the small proportion of it which made up the court and the salons.

In addition to the political unrest which pervaded the continent of Europe during the first seven decades of the nineteenth century, there was a social reorganization in progress, due to the coming of steam-driven machines in factories, and a new philosophic outlook due to the discoveries of science.

In the last analysis, serious drama rests on the general conception of what constitutes the values of human life, and what universal laws govern man's destiny. To the medieval and the Shakespearean audience the simple-minded—the mentally deficient—was one whom heaven had afflicted, and therefore he enjoyed a special immunity. The modern who knows the laws of heredity cannot be amused by the spectacle of any mental affliction, however slight. His idea of its connection with the order of the universe is different from that of the Elizabethans.

Similarly, poverty today is not something which the conscientious may dismiss comfortably by contributing to soup-kitchens for the unemployed. There is a deepening conviction that far from being a judgment of heaven, or a means of developing virtue, poverty is simply a disease which results from man's ignorance and lack of skill in managing the economic resources of the world, just as typhoid fever results from impure water, and infected wounds from imperfectly sterilized hospital apparatus.

Since the history of the nineteenth century was so largely a story of the advance of political democracy and the realignment of social problems as a result of the new conditions of living which the Industrial Revolution brought about, the dramatist of that time was facing a life on which he had no well-defined philosophy, and very little real knowledge. Generally he simply gave up the problem of transmuting it into drama and continued to write plays in the traditional fashions.

In Germany the great period of drama was the eighteenth century which in England and France was almost barren of great plays. Lessing, Schiller and Goethe were

Germany's eighteenth century writers. The two last named carried over into the nineteenth century, Schiller dying in 1805 and Goethe twenty-seven years later. Not only was Germany nearer to her greatest literary period in this century than were the other nations, but her drama had made a beginning of something much nearer realism, something far more in accordance with the new ideals of democracy and realism than either that of England or France. Lessing's *Miss Sara Sampson, Emilia Galotti,* and *Minna von Barnhelm* were stories of eighteenth century Germany written in something much more like the language of life than anything in French drama or, indeed, the English either.

The opera too took on a national character about this time. Mozart's *The Magic Flute* utilized both German folk tunes and German legend. However, Schiller, the greatest of German dramatists in that century, took his inspiration from Shakespeare and the classics, and succeeded in producing some splendid dramatic poems which unite the ancient perfection of form, and the Shakespearean philosophy of man the arbiter of his destiny, in stories of national interest.

Schiller had dramatic as well as literary genius, and perhaps if he had lived as long as his friend and associate, Goethe, he would have produced a drama which reflected the new life in the new age, but no worthy follower appeared after his death, so imitators of Schiller, or writers of the most trivial domestic drama held the stage, though at least three first-rate writers were producing works which the public did not always appreciate. In 1853 Gustav Freytag wrote his masterpiece *The Journalists,* a comedy familiar to most students of German, who are unfortunately generally too much occupied in the labor of translating it to appreciate its merits as a drama. Not only does this play have its roots in the political life of the period, but it presents the journalistic profession with sufficient realism to give the work the truth of actuality, and with sufficient artistic interpretation to endow it with idealistic truth. There is a pleasant picture of German life too and some well drawn characters to carry on the diverting story.

Why Freytag did not continue to write such comedies is hard to say. Perhaps he preferred to stop with one successful work rather than to risk a failure. Possibly he found the novel and the essay more congenial fields.

Frederick Hebbel, who was born in 1813 wrote his first play in the new manner when he was twenty-six. *Judith* was a dramatization of the old story with a new motivation, which made it a study of the antagonism of the sexes. Five years later he wrote the first of modern social dramas, *Maria Magdalena,* the study of a middle class family destroyed not by the oppression of the nobles, but by the workings of its own narrow codes. *Judith* was not the only instance in which he uses an old story to set forth a problem of modern society; *Gyges and His Ring, Herod and Miriamne,* and *Moloch,* are stories of antiquity retold from a modern standpoint. Nor did he confine his mining to these classical realms, but wrote a drama on the German legend of the *Nibelungen.* He was not popular because the subjects he chose were either abnormal, or required unusual psychological understanding to follow. Psychology is still mystifying almost a century after Hebbel's day. Pessimism, which is fashionable in modern drama, if not popular, was not acceptable to German audiences of the 1840s. It remained for later generations to revive Hebbel's works and to praise their "modern" spirit.

The third dramatist who wrote plays which posterity esteems was Ludwig Anzengruber, born in Vienna in 1839, and producing his best works in the 1870s. Born of a peasant family himself, he found in peasant life the material for his best works, as he said himself, not because the fashion of the time was that of attributing all virtues to the lowly, but because life is less conventional and artificial in that stratum of society and the pattern of destiny is easier to perceive. The real power of this dramatist, as of any really great writer, is in the characters he creates. They have sufficient depth of soul and mind to be tragic figures or truly comic ones.

But Germany of the 1870s was from the standpoint of drama very much like Rome after the conquest of Greece. The defeated in arms conquered the literature of the vic-

tors, and imitations of French plays crowded out native drama in Germany until Anzengruber, winner of the Schiller drama prize in 1878, could truthfully declare in 1880, "We no longer have a stage."

If there was no real national German theater, there were two privately managed dramatic institutions which were to exert considerable effect upon the German theater. The first of these was the Wagner festivals at Bayreuth, and the other was the court theater of the Duke of Meiningen. The duke's company performed somewhat the service for Germany of the 1870s and 1880s as the Theater Guild has performed for America. They operated under a similar system. There were no stars in the cast. On the contrary, the greatest actor might be selected to play the most unimportant role—and he was bound to accept the assignment. The Meiningers as they were called, being in a sense a private company, were free to choose plays solely upon their merits, and they gave splendid performances of Schiller's masterpieces, and Shakespeare's too. Later they added to their repertoire the works of new dramatists: Ibsen and Bjornson from Norway; Echegaray of Spain, besides some contemporary Germans whose work has not survived the test of time. The Duke of Meiningen was himself the director of this company, and in addition to providing beautiful and appropriate stage settings, he drilled each performer until he brought his work to the utmost perfection. This company began its touring of Germany by a performance of *Julius Cæsar* in Berlin, in 1874. Nothing like that performance had been seen on the stage, though Wagner's operas were presented with a similar attention to making everything contribute to the idea of the performance as a whole. For sixteen years the Meiningers educated the German public in dramatic art. In 1889 another factor in the development of modern drama made its appearance. This was the Free Theater.

This institution did not originate in Germany, but in France. In both of these countries, the theaters receive subsidies from the state, and that gives the government a right to censor the plays appearing there. To escape the timidity of managers, who naturally did not wish to risk

loss of approval from their conservative patrons, the limitations of the average audience which in Germany as in America does not know anything about dramatic art but does know what it likes, and the strictures of police censorship, which in Germany as elsewhere is more energetic than enlightened, the Germans borrowed from Paris the idea of the *Thèâtre Libre*. The performances in these theaters were not for the public, but for members of a dramatic society. Not being commercial, they were not under the supervision of the guardians of public morals. The first performance of the Berlin Free Theater was Ibsen's *Ghosts*. It was in this theater that Hauptmann's work first appeared. The particular mission of this theatrical movement was to bring before the public the naturalistic drama which was excluded from the official playhouses.

Although naturalism was only a rather brief phase of the development of modern drama, it is important as an expression of the spirit of the time, and for the influence it exerted. In general it attempted to turn the scientific method and outlook to the production of works of art. Science examines phenomena, first taking care to make exact observations, then tracing these phenomena to their causes, and following them to their results. Instead of selecting facts which fit into a preconceived theory, the scientist must harbor all theories only provisionally; he must keep his eye fixed not upon the theory, but upon the world of reality, and impartially record its workings, irrespective of how these fit into the theory. Thus and only thus, he may discover the chemical, biological, and physical laws of the material world, and make possible the marvelous advance of science, which has so changed our environment.

Zola and Balzac and Flaubert in France attempted a similar treatment of human life. Instead of assuming certain moral laws of the universe, and certain corresponding actions and reactions in the human mind, soul, and body, these novelists set themselves to record the facts of human life. They did not select those incidents which embody certain ideas, but aimed rather at giving a cross section, what the modern sociologist calls a "random sample" of humanity. At least that was their theory. In practice they

selected their material almost as narrowly as had the idealists and romanticists, the distinguishing characteristic of these disciples of naturalism being that they made their selections from the levels of life rejected by the others. The diseased, and the degraded, who live lives of wretchedness and crime, whose very loves are brutish, became the naturalists' material. In their impatience with the dreamy unrealities of the romanticists and the false pictures of life romantic works create, these writers offered a view which was equally out of perspective, though probably valuable.

Undoubtedly it is the business of those who live in an environment of science to use the scientific method to improve the lot of humanity, and the first step toward alleviating any evil is that of perceiving and understanding its nature. In Zola's time the domains of pathology and of art were less clearly defined than today, but even yet they have disputed boundaries. Zola wished to transfer Naturalism to the stage, but his one play was unsuccessful, nor did any great dramatist arise in France who produced a drama of naturalism which commanded attention as a work of art. In Sweden Strindberg achieved the greatest success any dramatist has made in this domain. His plays are much more popular in Europe than in America, perhaps for the reason that they treat chiefly of sex antagonism.

The idealist interprets life, as did Shakespeare, the realist intensifies it, as did Ibsen, the Naturalist reproduces it, or at least claims and tries to do so. As art cannot ever be a reproduction of nature, the naturalistic writer can only make selection of different aspects of life. He must, like the idealist, select. Henry Arthur Jones has made this point in several of his essays, particularly in the one *On Being Rightly Amused at the Theatre.*

"A stage play should never be mistaken for real life.

"All art that deceives you into taking it for nature itself is inferior and comparatively worthless. I lately saw a drawing of Turner's called 'Llanthony Abbey.' Frail and beautiful, like the ghost of that dead faith that built it, sequestered and decaying, like its own religion amidst the boundless disintegrating forces of undecaying nature, the

abbey rose under the everlasting hills, smitten with an unearthly loveliness, consecrated afresh with those gleams that never fell on sea or land . . . a painter's dream of the scene it was supposed to realize. It was one of the most beautiful transcripts from nature that I have ever looked upon. But the whole picture was not two feet square. . . .

"It is the first condition of all intelligent appreciation of stage-work that it should be rightly seen and known to be what it is; not nature, not real fact, but an abstract, a reflection, a suggestion, a seizure of one or two aspects of the million facets and the million facts of nature.

"In that landscape of Turner, there was a large stretch of country pictured on a canvas not two feet square. Now if the artist wished to give you all the facts of that landscape, he would have to employ a canvas as large as the scene itself. More than this. If you took a sufficiently powerful microscope you would find that every morsel of land in that country-side was crammed by nature with facts too small for your natural eyesight to be aware of . . . You see at once it is impossible for the artist to render all the facts or even a millionth part of the facts. What does he do? Frankly he does not try to compete with nature, but with a few strokes of his brush he hints the essential features of the scene, giving you, as far as he can, its truth and spirit as they appeal to him, and leaves the facts to take care of themselves. And this is all the dramatic author can do in his sphere."

Idealist, realist and naturalist alike must all choose. They differ in *what* they choose and how they treat their chosen material. Ibsen was mistaken for a naturalist, but nothing could be further from the truth. His dialogue, for all its impression of everyday reality, is as carefully devised as that of any classical writer. Lewisohn quotes the first of the German playwrights of Naturalism, Arno Holz, on this subject: "There is no difference in kind between the dialogue of Schiller and the dialogue of Ibsen. Both are written literature, not speech overheard." Not only his dialogue, but his incidents are something distinct from actual life. By selection, arrangement, and compres-

sion he intensifies the effect of his people's character and of the incidents of their lives. They are material from the real world, but just as the painter may so compose his picture that the church may tower above the distant mountain, or the man be larger than the tree on the canvas, and yet not convey an erroneous impression of their dimensions, so Ibsen heightens the effect of ordinary experiences of ordinary people by his presentation of them.

Naturalism, aiming at reproduction instead of interpretation or intensification, chooses the things that can be most convincingly reproduced in "three hours' traffic on the stage." Of course one cannot reproduce the experience of years in that time. Plot and climax must take a secondary place. Instead of trying to reproduce a story—which would be impossible, naturalism seeks to present backgrounds, moods and atmosphere. Science had revealed that man instead of being his own star, and able, if he were perfect and honest to "command all life, all influence and all fate," was in fact the product of forces over which he had little or no control: heredity and environment. The fate of the old Greeks, and the personal responsibility of the Protestantism which pervades the Shakespearean drama, gave place to a grimmer sort of destiny.

Since circumstance is the arbiter of human destiny, naturalism found all destiny equally worth the artist's attention. Life is not simply the happy, the noble, the beautiful; these are simply the results of certain combinations of historical, geographical, social, and biological forces, which in other combinations produce the wretched, the abnormal, the bestial and the hideous. It is not the business of art to put valuations upon these manifestations of natural laws, but to reproduce them as they are.

Such a doctrine resulted in a drama which substituted the sensational for the imaginative and the tedium of actuality for the intensification of realism. The early naturalists transferred into their works the actual speech of life, in all its disconnectedness and incompleteness. Arno Holz is credited with the first successful naturalist drama, the *Die Familie Selicke*. Of this Witkowski says

that it "presented indifferent works with painful tediousness." Ludwig Lewisohn's judgment of the work is "No speech so haunting in its utter reality had ever appeared—except in accidental fragments—on the stage or between the covers of a book. And that speech bit itself into mind after mind; it gave the creative impulse to a whole literature of uncommon beauty and power and volume."

It is true that naturalism inspired works of beauty and power, but there is small resemblance between the naturalism of Zola and that which grew up in Germany and flowered in the works of Gerhardt Hauptmann. The true artist never reproduces: he *creates* something new. Hauptmann took the materials of naturalism,—the conception of man as an animal, the law of life as the survival of the fittest, the perception that heredity and environment are the makers of man's destiny rather than will and character, the truth that woman is simply man's equal in the scheme of nature, and that the romantic virtues assigned to her are fictions—but out of this material he created new forms of literature. And those works are not dramas of naturalism but of modified naturalism.

Hauptmann

Gerhardt Hauptmann was born in 1862 in a small town of Silesia, that province which was to cause so much dissension sixty-five years later, because its mines were coveted by various participants in the Great War. Those coal mines were almost as dangerous to the peace of the Silesian peasants in the decades between 1870 and 1890, as they were to the peace of Europe from 1918–1923. Hauptmann saw the peasants grow rich without effort, and degenerate in character because their wealth could bring them nothing better than the opportunity to indulge in excesses. His own family had been weavers for several generations. His grandfather had been one of the poverty-stricken workers, who in 1844 rose in vain revolt against the employers, who were exploiting them. The stories of life in this region and in Berlin he made the framework of such dramas as *The Weavers, Before Sunrise,* and *Rose Bernd.*

The second named of these dramas treats of the degeneration of a peasant family as a consequence of the wealth gained from the coal discovered upon the land. The family consists of Krause, his second wife, and two daughters by a former marriage. The father and husband spends all his time in drunken carouses; the wife has a stable-boy for a lover, the elder daughter is a hopeless victim of alcoholism, whose child died of that disease at the age of three. She is married to a loose-living civil engineer. Helene, the younger daughter has been educated in a convent, and when the play opens has come home to take up life in her native village.

Arnold Loth is a young socialist, who has come to make a study of the conditions prevailing in the district. He takes up lodging in the Krause household, because he and the civil engineer had been classmates. Loth is eager to change conditions among the miners, and Helene enters enthusiastically into his plans for social betterment.

GERHARDT HAUPTMANN

Naturally they fall in love. The love-scene in which Helene voices her longing for happiness and beauty is the work of Hauptmann, the poet, whom no naturalism could obliterate.

But this flower of aspiring love blooms out of the vilest slime. The hideous desire of her bestial father, and the advances of her brother-in-law make Helene yearn for Arnold as a refuge. But Arnold is a dreamer and something of a coward. When a doctor tells him the history of Helene's family, he leaves, fearing the consequences of this evil strain of blood upon his descendants. Helene in despair stabs herself.

This is in many respects a characteristic drama of naturalism. It presents scenes of utter degradation, which are horrifying instead of being tragically terrible. Helene and Arnold are not characters whose wills oppose other wills, but human beings defeated by circumstances. The trouble is that even the gods of naturalism are lacking. Helene is not the daughter of the corrupt adulteress nor was her father a drunkard when she was born. Heredity, that most terrible of the modern substitutes for Fate, can inspire no authentic terror in this case, because that same science which made the world aware of that Fate, also declared that acquired characteristics cannot be transmitted. So the tragedy for Helene and Arnold inheres in the weak will and ignorance of the socialist-dreamer. Anyone who knew as much as he did of heredity should have known a little more if the play was to make its appeal on the basis of naturalism and the findings of science upon which that naturalism rests.

Hauptmann's next play was *The Peace-Festival.* It is handled somewhat in the Ibsen fashion. That is, a play in which what is staged is the last act of a drama which has begun and developed in the past. The dramatic suspense of the play proper, in *Ghosts* for example, is the revelation of what has created the present situation, and by inference, what can then be done about it. Ibsen excels at this weaving the present and the past into a single strand of life.

The Weavers

Hauptmann's most famous and probably his greatest work is the drama dealing with conditions among the poor Silesian factory people. It is claimed that this play is based on a historic strike which took place in 1844. It is certain that Hauptmann's grandfather was one of the workers involved in that uprising. Though poverty did not blight Gerhart Hauptmann's own life, he had heard vivid accounts of the suffering of his forebears, and he was himself a person keenly sympathetic with the disinherited of earth. Lewisohn quotes from one of the dramatist's poems as a summary of his attitude toward life: "Let thy soul, O poet, be like an Æolian harp, stirred by the gentlest breath. Eternally must its strings vibrate under the breathing of the world's woe. For the world's woe is the root of our heavenward yearning. Thus will thy songs be rooted in the world's woe, but the heavenly light will shine upon their crown."

There is much that is common in the attitude of Galsworthy and Hauptmann. Both are keenly aware of the sorrows of the poor, and both present their pictures without bitterness or appeal to class prejudice. Hauptmann being a poet, has been able to breathe into his work perhaps more of that "heavenly light." This is not because he is more optimistic than Galsworthy, or holds any easy philosophy that it will all work out right in the end. It comes out of his utter truthfulness. It is probable that no one can convey the truth of human experience, no matter how terrible that experience may be, without conveying also some sense of the greatness of human life.

There is something in the method of naturalism which is akin to collecting specimens. The ignorant collector simply gets together an accumulation of objects, which though interesting enough individually, illustrate no scientific truth, no development of types; or they may even be so arranged and annotated as to paint to a false conclusion. The real

scientist, on the contrary, is careful to avoid pointing to erroneous deductions, and while he may not reveal ultimate truths, he sets his followers on the path toward truth. Hauptmann's modified naturalism as it appears in his greatest works has this same quality. It is fairly easy for a skilled technician, such as Pinero, for example, or Hauptmann's contemporary, Sudermann, to modify naturalism into something sensational, but to make drama out of the undistorted, unmagnified material of human life is difficult indeed. It is still a question of whether or not such a technique can produce a successful stage play. There is no question that it can produce literature in dramatic form.

The Weavers is not, like *Strife,* which critics claim was written in imitation of the German play, a story of some particular workman, but of a whole class. Herein lies both its distinction as a piece of literature and its weakness as a stage production. It is Hauptmann's triumph that he succeeded in weaving out of those various cries of the workers, a picture of the *mind* of the class, as well as of their conditions. After reading this play one realizes the long agony of dogged suffering which at last is goaded to protest —not in action or a definite program but only in a cry of resentment against their wretchedness. For a brief interval they are exalted by dreams of power, only to sink back again powerless. Instead of focussing the action in the contest of two leaders, each representing his class as do Anthony and Roberts in *Strife,* Hauptmann shows a group of people revolting against conditions. One may almost declare that the conditions take the place of a personal antagonist, and certainly the weavers as a class take the place of the protagonist. This is a literary achievement. But it is not effective in the theater, because human nature is not moved by the sufferings of crowds. The account of a starving community does not stir up newspaper readers in anything like the degree that the story of one man's dying of hunger will. The average imagination can visualize one starving individual; it can form no adequate conception of a thousand victims of hunger.

Whatever its shortcomings as a work for presentation in the theater, Hauptmann's play approaches perfection of

technique when considered in respect to what the author attempted to do. He wished to portray a condition, and to show how this condition affected a class, how it inspired the weavers to brief violence, and wrought futile destruction and suffering. The style of great works of art is not so much a choice of the artist as something imposed by the nature of the subject itself. One does not build cathedrals of lumber, nor are those pointed arches a whim of the architect; they are what the soaring edifice must have to carry its height and its vault. It is impossible to read *The Weavers* without pity and understanding for those workers of the forties and for all who suffer because of the ills of our economic system, whether under the "cottage system" of the last century, or the factory regime of the twentieth.

The first act takes place in the office of the fustian manufacturer, Dreissiger. The weavers have brought the cloth they have woven to be weighed and tested, and to receive their scanty pay. The interior of the whitewashed room is carefully described as are the manager, Pfeiffer, with his scales and magnifying glass, and the cashier. Neumann. Of the workers the stage direction says:

It is a sultry day toward the end of May. The clock is on the stroke of twelve. Most of the waiting work-people have the air of standing before a bar of justice, in torturing expectation of a decision that means life or death to them. They are marked too, by the anxious timidity characteristic of the receiver of charity, who has suffered many humiliations, and conscious that he is barely tolerated, has acquired the habit of self-effacement. Add to this an expression on every face that tells of constant, fruitless brooding. There is a general resemblance among the men. _ _ _ The majority are flat-breasted, short-winded, sallow and poor looking—creatures of the loom, their knees bent with much sitting. At a first glance the women show fewer typical traits. They look over-driven, worried, reckless, whereas the men still make some show of pitiful self-respect; and their clothes are ragged, while all the men's are patched and mended. Some of the young girls are not without a certain charm, consisting in a wax-like pallor, a slender figure and large, projecting melancholy eyes.

NEUMANN (*counting out money*). Comes to one and sevenpence halfpenny.

WEAVER'S WIFE (*about thirty, emaciated, takes up the money with trembling fingers*). Thank you, sir.

NEUMANN (*seeing that she does not move on*). Well, something wrong this time, too?

WEAVER'S WIFE (*agitated, imploringly*). Do you think I might have a few pence in advance? I need it that bad.

NEUMANN. And I need a few pounds. If it was only a question of needing it——! (*Already occupied in counting out another weaver's money.*) It's Mr. Dreissiger who settles about pay in advance.

WEAVER'S WIFE. Couldn't I speak to Mr. Dreissiger himself, then, sir?

PFEIFER (*now manager, formerly weaver. The type is unmistakable, only he is well fed, well dressed, clean shaven; also takes snuff copiously. He calls out roughly*). Mr. Dreissiger would have enough to do if he had to attend to every trifle himself. That's what we are here for. (*He measures and then examines through the magnifying glass.*) Mercy on us! what a draught! (*Puts a thick muffler round his neck.*) Shut the door whoever comes in.

APPRENTICE (*loudly to* PFEIFER). You might as well talk to sticks and stones.

PFEIFER. That's done—Weigh. (*The weaver places his web on the scales.*) If you only understood your business a little better! Full of lumps again; . . . I hardly need look at the cloth to see them. Call yourself a weaver, and "draw a long bow" as you've done there.

[BECKER *has entered. A young, exceptionally powerfully built weaver; off-hand, almost bold in manner.* PFEIFER, NEUMANN *and the* APPRENTICE *exchange looks of mutual understanding as he enters.*

BECKER. Devil take it! This is a sweating job and no mistake.

FIRST WEAVER (*in a low voice*). This blazing heat means rain.

[OLD BAUMERT *forces his way in at the glass door, through which the crowd of weavers can be seen waiting their turn. The old man stumbles forward, and lays his bundle on the bench beside* BECKER'S. *He sits down by it and wipes the sweat from his face.*

OLD BAUMERT. A man has a right to a rest after that.

BECKER. Rest's better than money.

OLD BAUMERT. Yes, but we needs the money too. Good morning to you, Becker.

BECKER. Morning, Father Baumert! Goodness knows how long we'll have to stand here.

FIRST WEAVER. And what does that matter? What's to hinder a weaver waitin' for an hour, or for a day, if need be? What else is he there for?

PFEIFER. Silence there! We can't hear our own voices.

BECKER (*in a low voice*). This is one of his bad days.

PFEIFER (*to the weaver standing before him*). How often have I told you that you must bring cleaner cloth? What sort of mess is this? Knots and straw and all kinds of dirt.

REIMANN. It's for want of a new picker, sir.

APPRENTICE (*has weighed his piece*). Short weight, too.

PFEIFER. I never saw such weavers. I hate to give out yarn to them. It was another story in my day. I'd have caught it finely from my master for work like that. A man had to know his trade then—that's the last thing that's thought of nowadays. Reimann, one shilling.

REIMANN. But there's always a pound allowed for waste.

PFEIFER. I've no time. Next man! What have you to show?

HEIBER (*lays his web on the table. While* PFEIFER *is examining it, he goes up close to him; eagerly, in a low tone*). Beg pardon, Mr. Pfeifer, but I wanted to ask you, sir, if you would perhaps be so very kind as to do me the favor and not take my advance money off this week's pay.

PFEIFER (*measuring and examining the texture; jeeringly*). Well! What next, I wonder. This looks very much as if half the weft had stuck to the bobbins again.

HEIBER (*continues*). I'll be sure to make it right next week, sir. But this last week I've had to put in two days work on the estate. And my missus is ill in bed. . . .

PFEIFER (*gives the web to be weighed*). Another piece of real slop-work. (*Already examining a new web.*) What a selvage! Here it's broad, there it's narrow; here it's drawn in by the wefts goodness know how tight, and there it's torn out again by the temples. And hardly seventy threads weft to the inch. What's come of the rest? Do you call this honest work? I never saw anything like it.

[HEIBER *repressing tears stands humiliated and helpless.*

BECKER (*in a low tone to* BAUMERT). To please that brute you'd have to pay for extra yarn out of your own pocket.

[*The* WEAVER'S WIFE, *who has remained standing near the cashier's table, from time to time looking around appealingly, takes courage once more and comes forward.*

WEAVER'S WIFE (*to cashier, imploringly*). I don't know what's to come to me, if you don't give me a little advance this time—O Lord, O Lord!

PFEIFER (*calls across*). It's no good whining and dragging the Lord's name into the matter. You're not so anxious about Him at other times. You look after your husband and see that he's not to be found so often lounging in the public house. We can give no pay in advance. We have to account for every penny. It's not our money. People that are industrious and understand their work, and do it in the fear of God, never need their pay in advance. So now you know.

NEUMANN. If a Bielau weaver got four times as much pay, he would squander it four times over and be in debt into the bargain.

WEAVER'S WIFE (*in a loud voice as if appealing to the general sense of justice*). No one can't call me idle, but I'm not fit now for what I once was. I've twice had a miscarriage. And as to John, he's but a poor creature. He's been to the shepherd at Zerlau, but he couldn't do him no good and . . . you can't do more than you've strength for. We works as hard as ever we can. This many a week I've been at it until far into the night. And we'll keep our heads above water right enough if I can just get a bit of strength into me. But you must have pity on us, Mr. Pfeifer, sir. (*Eagerly, coaxingly.*) You'll please be so very kind as to let me have a few pence on the next job, sir?

PFEIFER (*paying no attention*). Fielder, one and twopence.

WEAVER'S WIFE. Only a few pence to buy bread with. We can't get no more credit. We've got a lot of little ones.

NEUMANN (*half-aside to the* APPRENTICE). "Every year brings a child to the linen-weaver's wife, heigh-ho, heigh-ho, heigh."

APPRENTICE (*takes up the rhyme, half-singing*). "And the little brat it's blind, the first weeks of its life, heigh-ho, heigh-ho, heigh."

REIMANN (*not touching the money which the cashier has counted out to him*). We've always got one and fourpence for the web.

PFEIFER (*calls across*). If our terms don't suit you, Reimann, you have only to say so. There's no scarcity of weavers—especially of your sort. For full weight we give full pay.

REIMANN. How anything can be wrong with the weight is past . . .

PFEIFER. You bring a piece of fustian with no fault in it and there will be no fault in the pay.

REIMANN. It's not possible there's too many knots in this web.

PFEIFER (*examining*). If you want to live well then be sure you weave well.

HEIBER (*has remained standing near* PFEIFER, *so as to seize any favorable opportunity. He laughs at* PFEIFER'S *little witticism, then steps forward and again addresses him*). I wanted to ask you, sir, if you would perhaps have the great kindness not to take off my advance of sixpence off today's pay? My missus is bedridden since February. She can't do a hand's turn for me, and I've to pay a bobbin girl. And so . . .

PFEIFER (*takes a pinch of snuff*). Heiber, do you think I have nó one to attend to but you? The others must have their turn.

REIMANN. As the warp was given me I took it home and fastened it to the beam. I can't bring back better yarn than I get.

PFEIFER. If you are not satisfied, you need come for no more. There are plenty ready to tramp the soles off their shoes to get it.

NEUMANN (*to* REIMANN). Do you not want your money?

REIMANN. I can't bring myself to take such pay.

NEUMANN (*paying no further attention to* REIMANN). Heiber, one shilling. Deduct sixpence for pay in advance. Leave sixpence.

HEIBER (*goes up to the table, looks at the money, stands shaking his head as if unable to believe his eyes, then slowly takes it up*). Well, I never! (*sighing.*) Oh, dear, oh, dear!

OLD BAUMERT (*looking into* HEIBER'S *face*). Yes, Franz, that's so. There's matter enough for sighing.

HEIBER (*speaking with difficulty*). I've a girl lying sick at home, too, an' she needs a bottle of medicine.

OLD BAUMERT. What's wrong with her?

HEIBER. Well, you see, she's always been a sickly bit of a thing. I don't know. . . . I needn't mind tellin' you—she brought her trouble with her. It's in her blood, and it breaks out here, there and everywhere.

OLD BAUMERT. It's always the way. Let folks be poor and one trouble comes to them on top of another. There's no help for it, and there's no end to it.

HEIBER. What are you carryin' in that cloth, Father Baumert?

OLD BAUMERT. We hadn't so much as a bite in the house, and so I've had the little dog killed. There's not much on him, for the poor beast was half-starved. A nice little dog he was! I couldn't kill him myself. I hadn't the heart to do it.

One after another, the weavers indicate their pitiful stories. Only Becker varies the note of abject misery by his scornful defiance. His scorn is little more availing than the vain entreaties of the others. His remark when he is discharged that it's all one whether he starves at his

loom or walking the roads summarizes the alternatives, not only for him but for the rest.

Weaver Heinrich's little Philip, a boy of eight, is borne in from the street in a dead faint. He has collapsed from the strain of carrying two heavy pieces of fustian the six miles from home to the office. The journey plus the burden were too much for the starving boy. When Becker calls tauntingly to his recent employer, "Give him something to eat and he'll soon be all right," Dreissiger, the manufacturer, remarks: "That fellow will come to a bad end."

The incident of the boy who almost died on Dreissiger's sofa quite upset the manufacturer, and he unburdens his mind to the weavers, and his office help.

"It's a disgrace. The child's so weak that a puff of wind would blow him over. How people,—how any parents could be so thoughtless is what passes my comprehension. Loading him with two heavy pieces of fustian to carry good six miles! No one would believe it who hadn't seen it. It simply means that I shall have to make a rule that no goods brought by children will be taken over."

The reason Dreissiger felt he must make this rule was not entirely for the protection of the children, as his further remarks make clear:

"I sincerely trust such a thing will never occur again— Who gets all the blame for it? Why the manufacturer, of course. It's entirely our fault. If some little fellow sticks in the snow in winter and goes to sleep, a special correspondent arrives posthaste, and in two days we have a blood-curdling story served up in all the papers. Is any blame laid on the father, the parents that send such a child? Not a bit."

He finishes up his speech by telling the risks and anxieties of the manufacturer: how much better off the fustian weavers are than the linen-weavers, how, though he is losing money, or at least has stores of fustian which he does not know when he can sell, he is still planning to keep his weavers at work—and to take on two hundred more, at terms Pfeifer will explain. When the first weaver's wife and Heiber attempt to talk to him of an advance, he refers them to Pfeifer, as he is already late.

The dramatist did not make the manufacturer a villain. He was simply the business man, whose first and last duty was to make his business pay. That the whole system of manufacturing was wrong, did not enter into his consciousness. Many years later the Leeds manufacturers made the discovery that their high-paid, efficient labor enabled them to undersell competitors who paid poor wages. Dreissiger, like most employers, knew no way to cut down costs except by cutting down wages.

From the office, the next scene shifts to Old Baumert's lodgings in Ansorge's house. The landlord is also a weaver, or was until his health failed. He has had no rent for half a year The mother of the boy who fainted comes in and tells them that her children are starving, but they have not so much as a handful of flour in the house. Mrs. Heinrich is desperate. "Let me work till I fall down—I'm more dead than alive—it's no use. Am I able to fill nine hungry mouths? We got a bit o' bread last night, but it wasn't enough even for the two smallest ones. Who was I to give it to, eh? They all cried 'Me, me, mother! give it to me!' And if it's like this while I'm still on my feet, what'll it be when I've to take to bed? Our few taters was washed away. We haven't a thing to put in our mouths."

After Mrs. Heinrich has gone, the Baumert girls resume weaving. Long familiarity with misery has made them callous. "That's the way she always goes on" one of them reassures Mrs. Baumert, who has a fear that Mrs. Heinrich might kill herself as she threatened. Presently Baumert comes in and with him a reserve soldier, in clean clothes. The soldier has money enough to buy some brandy and with the dog-meat and the few provisions Baumert has brought they have something like a feast, to which of course Ansorge is bidden.

Yet this is no joyful feast, but only a moment's respite from constant hunger and grinding toil. Not even the brandy which Jaeger, the former soldier, buys can really cheer the miserable villagers. Poor old Baumert, who has not tasted meat since he sold his Sunday coat two years ago, finds that his stomach is too weak to retain the eagerly anticipated food. Jaeger has been with Beckmann singing

"Bloody Justice" under Dreissiger's windows. He reads the song to the company, reads it badly from the rhetorical standpoint, but the stage direction says: "Despair, suffering, rage, hatred, thirst for revenge all find utterance." As Jaeger reads each verse the resentment of Baumert and Ansorge deepens. The song begins with a cry of the workers and ends with a curse on the employer. The weaver, it states, would be grateful for death:

Stretched on the rack, day after day,
Hearts sick and bodies aching;
Our heavy sighs, their witness bear
To spirits slowly breaking.

You villains all, you brood of hell,
You fiends in fashion human;
A curse will fall on all like you
Who prey on man and woman.

The suppliant knows he asks in vain,
Vain every word that's spoken.
"If not content, then go and starve—
Our rules cannot be broken."

The other four of the seven stanzas are in this same strain, and their effect, like that of the brandy, is intensified by quantity. Ansorge sums up the matter in the last words of the act, "The time's come for a change, I say. We'll stand it no longer! We'll stand it no longer! Come what may!"

The third act takes place in the public house at Peterswaldeau. Welzel, the kindly landlord, a peasant, a rag-dealer, a commercial traveler, and a carpenter are the principal characters, who, in this scene, help to show the weavers' lot and the contrast between that lot as it appears to outsiders and to those who experience its vicissitudes. The strains of a funeral hymn are heard and the carpenter says that Weaver Nentwich is dead.

TRAVELER. What I don't understand is this. . . . Take up whatever paper you like, and you'll find the most heart-rending accounts of the destitution among the weavers. You get the impression that three-quarters of the people in this neighborhood are starving. Then you come and see a funeral like what's going on

just now. I met it as I came into the village. Brass band, schoolmaster, school children, pastor, and such a procession behind them that you would think it was the Emperor of China that was getting buried. If the people have money to spend on this sort of thing, well . . .

THE CARPENTER. If you'll excuse me for saying so, sir, there's a deal of foolishness among the poor working-people hereabouts. They have a kind of inordinate idea, if I may say so, of the respect and duty and honor they're bound to show to such as are taken from their midst. And when it comes to be a case of parents, then there's no bounds whatever to their superstitiousness. The children and the nearest family scrapes together every farthing they can call their own, an' what's still wanting that they borrow from some rich man. They run themselves into debt over head and ears; they're owing money to the sexton, the pastor, and to all concerned. Then there's the victuals and drink and such like. No, sir, I'm far from speaking against dutifulness to parents; but it's too much when it goes the length of mourners having to bear the weight of it for the rest of their lives.

TRAVELER. But surely the pastor might reason them out of such foolishness.

CARPENTER. Begging your pardon, sir, but I must mention that every little place hereabouts has its church and its respected pastor to support. These honorable gentlemen has their advantages from big funerals. The larger the attendance is, the larger the offertory is bound to be. Whoever knows the circumstances connected with the working classes here, sir, will assure you that the pastors are strong against quiet funerals.

When the peasant has taken his drink and gone out after saying that the weavers are simply a lazy lot, the rag-dealer takes issue with him:

RAG-DEALER. A peasant like that's as stupid as his own ox. As if I didn't know all about the distress in the villages around here. Sad sights I've seen! Four and five lyin' naked on one sack of straw.

TRAVELER (*in a mildly remonstrative tone*). Allow me to remark, my good man, that there's a great difference of opinion as to the amount of distress here in the Eulengebirge. If you can read . . .

RAG-DEALER. I can read straight off as well as you. An' I know what I've seen with my own eyes. It would be queer if a man that's traveled the country with a pack on his back these

forty years an' more didn't know something about it. There was Fullern, now. You saw children scraping about among the dung-heaps along with the peasants' geese. The people up there died naked on the bare stone floors. In their sore need they ate the stinking weavers' glue. Hunger carried them off by the hundred.

TRAVELER. You must be aware since you are able to read that a strict investigation has been made by the Government, and that . . .

RAG-DEALER. Yes, yes, we all know what that means. They send a gentleman that knows all about it already, better nor if he had seen it, an' he goes about a bit in the village at the lower end where the better houses are. He doesn't want to dirty his shining boots. Thinks he to himself: All the rest'll be the same as this. An' so he steps into his carriage and drives away home again, an' writes to Berlin that there's no distress in the place at all. If he had but taken the trouble to go higher up into a village like that, to where the stream comes in, or across the stream on to the narrow side, or better still, if he'd gone up to the little out-o'-the-way hovels on the hill above, some of 'em that black and tumble-down as it would be a waste of a good match to set fire to 'em—it's another kind of report he'd have sent to Berlin. They should have come to me, these government gentlemen that wouldn't believe there was no distress here. I'd have opened their eyes for 'em in some of these starvation holes.

The weavers come in, and talk of the French Revolution, and of course they sing their song "Bloody Justice." A policeman brings word that the superintendent of the police has given orders that this song is not be sung in the streets of the village. Of course the young weavers pay no attention, and the old ones like Baumert go along with the crowd because they feel it is their only possible course.

The fourth act takes place at Dreissiger's, but the scene is not the office as in the first act, but a luxurious, if not particularly comfortable or tasteful private apartment. The minister, Kittlehaus, the tutor of Dreissiger's children and Mrs. Dreissiger are present when the curtain rises, the two former being in the midst of a serious conversation. It appears that Weinhold, the tutor, has been speaking of the weavers with sympathy and feels that something should be done for them. The minister says that it is natural for youth to have fine feelings—he had them himself when

young, but grand ideals, he asserts, don't last, and that Weinhold will agree with him when his own youth is past. But Weinhold says he cannot imagine such a thing and then the minister becomes didactic.

KITTLEHAUS. My dear Mr. Weinhold, however restless-minded and unsettled in a way a man may be (*in a tone of reproof*)—and you are a case in point—however violently and wantonly he may attack the existing order of things, he calms down in the end. I grant you, certainly, that among our professional brethren individuals are to be found who, at a fairly advanced age, still play youthful pranks. One preaches against the drink evil and founds temperance societies; another publishes appeals which undoubtedly read most effectively. But what good do they do? The distress among the weavers, where it does exist, is in no way lessened—but the peace of society is undermined. No, no; one feels inclined in such cases to say, Cobbler stick to your last; don't take to caring for the belly, you who have the care of souls. Preach the pure Word of God, and leave all else to Him who provides shelter and food for the birds and clothes the lilies of the field.

Dreissiger comes in protesting at the conduct of the weavers who are singing the forbidden song before the house. When Weinhold says that they are hungry and ignorant, and are expressing their dissatisfaction in the only fashion they know, Parson Kittlehaus is inexpressibly shocked, and Dreissiger dismisses the young man. The weavers, desperate, wreck Dreissiger's house, in spite of the protests of some of the older and more timid.

Flushed with the wine of violence, the weavers march to another manufacturing plant. The central character of the last act is the pious old Hilse, who persistently remains at work. He has been a soldier, and left an arm on the battlefield for his king. In spite of his years, he says he will stand against rebellion. The rioting strikers are unable to persuade him to join them or even to sympathize with them.

One manufacturer, frightened, hangs out a board on which is written "You shall have full satisfaction." Of this the rag-dealer says: "He might ha' spared himself that trouble—*that* won't help him. It's something else they've set their minds on here. It's the factories. They're goin'

to smash up the power looms. For it's them that are ruinin' the hand-loom weaver. Even a blind man might see that. No! the good folk know what they're after, an' no sheriff will bring them to reason, and no police superintendent'll bring them to reason—much less a bit of board. Him as has seen them at work already, knows what's comin'."

The rag-dealer had previously described the scene at Dreissiger's: "They wrecked his house from cellar to roof. The good china came flying out o' the garret windows, rattlin' down the roof. God only knows how many pieces of fustian are soaking in the river. The water can't get away for them—it's running over the banks, the color of washin'-blue, with all the indigo they've poured out of the windows—it was flyin' like clouds of sky-blue dust. Oh, it's terrible, the destruction they've worked! And it's not only the house—it's the dye-works and the stores! They've broken the stair-rails, they've torn up the fine flooring—smashed the looking-glasses—cut an' hacked, an' torn an' smashed the sofas and chairs. It's awful—it's worse than war."

Inevitably the troops are called out to suppress the riot. Hilse, the loyal weaver, is one of the first victims, for he refused to leave his post. His grand-daughter vainly tries to rouse him by telling him that the strikers are driving the soldiers out of the village. Inconclusively the pitiful drama ends with Mother Hilse's saying: "Come now, father, can't you say something? You're frightenin' me."

Sudermann

In his *Modern Drama,* fittingly sub-titled as *An Essay in Interpretation,* Ludwig Lewisohn states that in his own country Hermann Sudermann is without honor as a serious artist because "No theatrical unveracity in the dramatic treatment of life is tolerated by German criticism; no calculated concession to the mob is pardoned. The commercial theater and the art of drama are kept rigidly apart."

Sudermann is frequently ranked with the naturalists, for no better reason than that he made a careful study of environment in his plays. But he never hesitated to resort to "theatrical unveracity," when veracity would have deprived his play of an effective scene. His favorite theme seems to be that of the woman who transgresses the social code of her sex, but these unconventional ladies are for the most part rather shallow persons, and so their destinies are not significant, however interesting they may be.

His best-known (but not his best) play is *Heimat,* a title which the reader of German understands to mean "native place" or "home." The English translation simply calls the play by its heroine's name, *Magda.* The German title is a much better one because the play is a study of the power which the traditions of one's native place, when reinforced by ties of family affection, may exert.

Magda Schwartze had quarreled with her dictatorial father, a lieutenant colonel, and left home rather than marry Pastor Heffterdingt, her parent's chosen husband for his elder daughter. This happened twelve years before the play opens, and during that period her father, younger sister, and stepmother have heard nothing from her. The opening scene in Colonel Schwartze's living room is a typical "well-made" exposition.

HERMANN SUDERMANN

Magda

ACT I

Scene. *Living-room in house of* Lieutenant-Colonel Schwartze, *furnished in simple and old-fashioned style. Left, at back, a glass door with white curtains through which the dining-room is seen. There is also a hall door, through which a staircase to the upper story is visible. Right, a corner window, with white curtains, surrounded by ivy. Left, a door to the* Lieutenant-Colonel's *room. Steel engravings of a religious and patriotic character, in tarnished gold frames, photographs of military groups, and cases of butterflies on the walls. Right, over the sofa, among other pictures, is the portrait of the first Mrs. Schwartze, young and charming, in the costume of the sixties. Behind the sofa, an old-fashioned desk. Before the window, a small table with work-box and hand sewing-machine. At the back, between the doors, an old-fashioned tall clock. In the left-hand corner, a stand with dried grasses; in front, a table with a small aquarium. Left, in front, a corner sofa with a small pipe-cupboard behind it. A stove with a stuffed bird on it; and behind, a bookcase with a bust of the old Emperor William.*

Marie *and* Theresa *discovered.* Theresa *at the door.* Marie *is occupied with the sewing-machine.*

Theresa. Miss Marie!

Marie. Well!

Theresa. Is your father still lying down?

Marie. What's the matter? Has any one called?

Theresa. No, but— There! Look at that! (*Producing a magnificent mass of flowers.*)

Marie. Good Heavens! Take it to my room quickly, or papa— But, Theresa, when the first came yesterday, weren't you told not to let any more be left?

Theresa. I'd have sent the florist's boy away if I could, but I was up on the ladder fixing the flag, and he laid it down and was gone before I could stop him. My, my, though, they're beautiful! and if I might make a guess, the Lieutenant——

Marie. You may not make a guess.

Theresa. All right, all right. Oh, I know what I wanted to ask. Does the flag hang well? (Marie *looks out, and nods assent.*)

THERESA. The whole town is full of flags and flowers, and the most expensive tapestries are hung out of the windows. One would think it was the King's birthday. And all this fuss is about a stupid Music Festival! What is this Music Festival, Miss Marie? Is it different from a choral festival?

MARIE. Yes, indeed.

THERESA. Is it better?

MARIE. Oh, much better!

THERESA. Oh, well, if it's better—— (*A knock.*)

MARIE. Come in!

[*Enter* MAX.

THERESA. Well, now I suppose I can leave the flowers. (*Exit* THERESA, *laughing.*)

MARIE. You ought to be ashamed of yourself, Max.

MAX. What on earth do you mean?

MARIE. Aren't these flowers yours?

MAX. Good Heavens! I can afford a few pennies for a bunch of violets once in a while, but this—Oh, no!

MARIE. Nor yesterday's?

MAX. No, nor yesterday's. (MARIE *rings.*)

[*Enter* THERESA.

MARIE. Please throw these flowers away.

THERESA. What! Throw those beautiful flowers away?

MARIE. You are right. The pastor would say, "If God's gifts do not please us, we must at least take care that they give pleasure to others." Wouldn't he?

MAX. Probably he would.

MARIE. Then you had better take them back to the florist's. Did they come from Zimmerman's? (THERESA *nods.*) Well, we'll sell them if we can, and give the money to Pastor Heffterdingt for his hospital.

THERESA. Shall I go now?

MARIE. After you have made the coffee. I'll serve it myself. (*Exit* THERESA.) These flowers are an insult! I need not tell you, Max, that I have given no one the shadow of an excuse for such a thing.

MAX. I'm very sure of that.

MARIE. And papa was so angry. He simply stormed. And I was quiet because I suspected it was you. If he got hold of the poor fellow, it would go hard with him.

MAX. Do you think it would be any better if I got hold of him?

MARIE. What rights have you in the case?

MAX. Marie! (*Takes her hand.*)

MARIE (*gently disengaging herself*). Oh, Max, please—not that. You know every corner of my heart. But we must think of the proprieties.

MAX. Proprieties! Oh, pshaw!

MARIE. Well, you know what a world we live in. Here, every one is afraid of every one else because each depends upon the good opinion of the other. If a few anonymous flowers can make me talked of, how much more——

MAX. Oh, yes, I know.

MARIE (*laying her hand on his shoulder*). Max, you'll speak again to Aunt Frankie, won't you, about the guaranty[1] of your income?

MAX. I have already.

MARIE. Well?

MAX (*shrugging his shoulders*). As long as she lives, not a penny.

MARIE. Then there's only one person who can help us.

MAX. Your father?

MARIE. No. For Heaven's sake, don't let him hear of it. He might forbid you the house.

MAX. What has he against me?

MARIE. You know how he has been since our misfortune. He feels that there is a blot to be wiped out; and especially now, when the whole town echoes with music,—when everything recalls Magda.

MAX. What if she should come back, some day?

MARIE. After twelve years? She will never come. (*Weeps.*)

MAX. Marie!

MARIE. You're right, you're right. I will put it away from me.

MAX. But who is the one person who can help us?

MARIE. Why, the pastor!

MAX. Yes, yes, he might.

MARIE. He can do everything. He stirs your very heart—as if— And then he seems like a kind of relation. He should have been my brother-in-law.

MAX. Yes, but she wouldn't have it so.

MARIE. Don't speak angrily, Max. She must have made atonement. (*A ring.*) Oh, perhaps this is he.

MAX. No, no, I forgot to tell you. Councillor von Keller asked me to bring him here to-day.

MARIE. What does he want?

MAX. He wants to interest himself in the missions—no, it's in

[1] Without which officers in the German army may not marry.

our home work particularly, I think. I don't know— Well, at any rate he wants to come to the committee meeting to-morrow.

MARIE. I'll call father and mother. (*Enter* THERESA *with a card.*) Show him in. (*Exit* THERESA.) Entertain him until I come back. (*Gives him her hand.*) And we'll talk again about the pastor some other time?

MAX. In spite of the proprieties?

MARIE. Oh, Max, I've been too forward! Haven't I?

MAX. Marie!

MARIE. No, no—we won't speak of it. Good-by. (*Exit* MARIE.)

[*Enter* VON KELLER.

MAX. You must content yourself with me for a few minutes, my dear Von Keller. (*They shake hands.*)

VON KELLER. With pleasure, my good sir, with pleasure. (*Sits.*) How our little town is changed by the festival! It really seems as if we were in the great world.

MAX (*laughing*). I advise you not to say that aloud.

VON KELLER. What did I say? I assure you I did not mean anything. If such a misunderstanding got abroad——

MAX. You have nothing to fear from me!

VON KELLER. Oh, of course not. Ah, how much better it would be to know nothing of the outer world!

MAX. How long were you away?

VON KELLER. Five years, with examinations and being sent down to commissioners and all that. Well, now I am back again. I drink home-brewed beer; I patronize local tailors; I have even, with a noble fearlessness of death, eaten the deer-steak of the season; and this I call pleasure! Yes, youth, travel, and women are good things; but the world must be ruled, and sober men are needed. Your time will come some day. The years of honor are approaching. Yes, yes, especially when one joins the ecclesiastical courts.

MAX. Are you going to do that?

VON KELLER. I think of it. And to be at one with those of the cloth—I speak quite openly with you—it is worth my while, in short, to interest myself in religious questions. I have of late in my speeches, as perhaps you know, taken this position; and as for the connection which this household has—let me tell you I am proud of them.

MAX. You might have been proud long ago.

VON KELLER. Excuse me, am I over-sensitive? Or do I read a reproach in your words?

MAX. Not quite that, but—if you will pardon me, it has some-

times appeared—and not to me alone—as if you avoided the houses where my uncle's family were to be found.

VON KELLER. And my presence here now—does not that prove the contrary?

MAX. Exactly. And therefore I too will speak very frankly. You were the last person to meet my lost cousin, Magda.

VON KELLER (*confused*). Who says——

MAX. You yourself have spoken of it, I am told. You met her with my friend Heydebrand when he was at the military academy.

VON KELLER. Yes, yes, it's true.

MAX. It was wrong of me not to ask you about her openly, but you will probably understand my reticence. I feel almost as if I belonged to this family and I feared to learn something which might disgrace it.

VON KELLER. Oh, not at all, not in the least. It was like this. When I was in Berlin for the State Examinations, I saw one day on Leipsic Street a familiar face,—a home face, if I may say so. You know what that is when one is far away. Well, we spoke to each other. I learned that she was studying to sing in opera, and that for this purpose she had left her home.

MAX. Not exactly. She left home to be companion to an old lady. (*Hesitates.*) There was a difference with her father.

VON KELLER. A love affair?

MAX. In a way. Her father supported the suitor and told her to obey or leave his house.

VON KELLER. And she went away?

MAX. Yes. Then, a year later, when she wrote that she was going on the stage, it made the breach complete. But what else did you hear?

VON KELLER. That's all.

MAX. Nothing else?

VON KELLER. Well, well,—I met her once or twice at the opera-house where she had a pass.

MAX. And you know absolutely nothing of her life?

VON KELLER (*with a shrug*). Have you heard nothing from her?

MAX. Nothing at all. Well, at any rate, I am grateful to you. I beg you, however, not to mention the meeting to my uncle, unless he asks you about it directly. He knows of it, of course, but the name of the lost daughter is never mentioned in this house.

VON KELLER. Oh, I have tact enough not to do that.

MAX. And what do you think has become of her?

VON KELLER. Oh, music is a lottery. Ten thousand blanks and one prize. A host of beginners and but one who makes a career.

If one becomes a Patti or a Sembrich, or, to come down to our own Festival——

[*Enter* SCHWARTZE *and* MRS. SCHWARTZE.

SCHWARTZE (*shaking hands*). Welcome to my house! Councillor von Keller, my wife.

MRS. SCHWARTZE. Pray sit down.

When Max and Von Keller have departed, some of the Colonel's old friends come in to play whist, but before the game is well started, it is interrupted by Pastor Heffterdingt, and Franziska Van Wendelowski, sister of the second Mrs. Schwartze.

[*Enter* FRANZISKA, *followed by the* PASTOR.

VON KLEBS. Ah, Miss Franziska! (*Aside.*) That is the end of us!

SCHWARTZE. No, no, we'll send her into the garden.

FRANZISKA (*throwing herself into a chair.*) Oh, I am so hot! I must get my breath. Pray don't put yourself out, General.

BECKMANN. Nine of spades!

VON KLEBS. Hello, here's the pastor too!

HEFFTERDINGT. Good-day to you! (*He shakes hands with each.*)

VON KLEBS. How long have you been running after the singers, Pastor?

HEFFTERDINGT. What? Oh, yes. Yes, I am running after singers. That's my occupation now.

SCHWARTZE. You can play with our card-party though, can't you?

HEFFTERDINGT. Unfortunately, no. I must, on the contrary, ask for a few serious words with you, my dear sir.

VON KLEBS. Ah, but you'll put it off, won't you, Pastor?

FRANZISKA. Oh, for Heaven's sake! It's so important. There must be no delay.

SCHWARTZE. Is my sister-in-law in it too?

FRANZISKA. Very much so.

VON KLEBS. Oh, well, we can go away again.

MRS. SCHWARTZE. Oh, we shouldn't like that at all.

SCHWARTZE. If it were not you, dear pastor, who separated us!

MRS. SCHWARTZE. But perhaps, Marie, the gentlemen would be willing to take a turn with you in the garden.

VON KLEBS. Certainly! That's good! That's famous! That's what we'll do! Miss Marie, be so good as to lead the way.

BECKMANN. Shall we leave the cards as they lie?

VON KLEBS. Yes, you have the nine of spades. Come on.

[*Exit* VON KLEBS, BECKMANN, *and* MARIE.

SCHWARTZE. Well?

FRANZISKA. Good Lord, don't you see how upset I am? You might at least give me a glass of water. (MRS. SCHWARTZE *brings it.*)

HEFFTERDINGT. Will you promise me, my dear sir, that whatever may happen you will preserve your calmness? You may believe me, much depends upon it.

SCHWARTZE. Yes, yes; but what——

HEFFTERDINGT. Miss Franziska will tell you better.

FRANZISKA (*after drinking the water*). This is a day indeed! Fate is avenging me. This man has for years outraged my holiest feelings, but to-day I can heap coals of fire on his head. (*Moved.*) Brother-in-law, give me your hand. Sister, yours.

HEFFTERDINGT. Pardon me, dear Miss Franziska, I think your news is so important that——

FRANZISKA (*melting*). Don't be angry, don't be angry. I am so upset! Well, yesterday I was at the Governor's. Only the nobility and the most important people were asked. You weren't asked?

SCHWARTZE (*angrily*). No.

FRANZISKA. I did not mean to offend you. Oh, I am so upset! (*Suppressing a sob at a sign from the* PASTOR.) Yes, yes, yes. I had on my yellow silk dress with the Brussels lace—you know I've had the train shortened. Well, as I stepped into the room—whom do you think I saw?

SCHWARTZE. Well, well, who?

FRANZISKA (*sobbing*). Your child! Magdalene!

[SCHWARTZE *staggers, and is supported by the* PASTOR. MRS. SCHWARTZE *cries out. A pause.*

SCHWARTZE. Pastor?

HEFFTERDINGT. It is true.

SCHWARTZE (*standing up*). Magdalene is no longer my child.

FRANZISKA. Ah, just wait. If you listen, you'll look at it in quite another light. Such a child you will welcome with open arms.

SCHWARTZE. Magdalene is no longer my child.

HEFFTERDINGT. But you may at least hear the circumstances.

SCHWARTZE (*dazed*). Yes, I suppose so.

FRANZISKA (*at a sign from* HEFFTERDINGT). Well, the great dining-hall was crammed. They were almost all strangers. Then I saw his Excellency coming down the room. And on his arm was a lady——

Mrs. Schwartze. On his Excellency's arm?

Franziska. With dark hair, and very proud and tall—and around her a crowd of men just like the circle about royalty—and chatting and laughing. And any one to whom she spoke seemed as happy as if it were the Princess. And she wore half a dozen orders, and an orange band with a medal about her neck. I was wondering what royal personage it could be—when she turned half around—and—I knew Magda's eyes!

Schwartze. Impossible!

Franziska. That is what I saw!

Heffterdingt. My dear Colonel, it is true.

Schwartze. If she— (*Clasping his hands.*) At least she has not fallen! She has not fallen! Father in Heaven, Thou hast kept her safely!

Mrs. Schwartze. And what is she, to have such honor——

Heffterdingt. She has become a great singer, and calls herself, in Italian, Maddalene, dall' Orto.

Mrs. Schwartze. Listen, listen, Leopold, the famous singer of whom the papers are so full is our child!

Schwartze. Magda is no longer my child.

Heffterdingt. Is that your fixed resolve?

Franziska. What sort of a heart have you? You ought to imitate me. She offended me as only she could,—the little wretch! That is, when she was a little wretch. But now—well, she did not look at me; but if she had——

Mrs. Schwartze. Leopold, she was on his Excellency's arm!

Schwartze. I tell you, and you,—and you, too, Pastor,—that I would rather have seen her lying in rags and tatters at my feet and begging for forgiveness. For then I should have known that she was still, at heart, my child. But why has she come back here? The world was large enough for her triumph. Why should she rob this humble provincial nest of ours? I know why. To show her miserable father how far one can rise in the world by treading filial duty into the dust,—that is her intention. Pride and arrogance speak in her, and nothing else.

Heffterdingt. My dear Colonel, I might ask, what speaks in you? A father's love? You could make no pretence to that. Your rights? I think rather it would be your right to rejoice in the good fortune of your child. Offended custom? I don't know—Your daughter has done so much through her own strength that even offended custom might at least condone it. It appears to me that pride and arrogance speak in you—and nothing else.

Schwartze (*angrily*). Pastor!

HEFFTERDINGT. Oh, don't be angry—there is no need of that. When I have something to say, I must say it, mustn't I? I might almost think that it displeased you that she has climbed so high in spite of you. Your pride demands something to forgive, and you are angry because there is nothing to be forgiven. And now, let me ask you, do you seriously wish that she had found her way home, lost and ruined? Do you dare answer for such a wish before the throne of God? (*A silence.*) No, my dear old friend. You have often, in jest, called me your good angel; let me be so once, in reality. Come with me—now—to-day.

FRANZISKA. If you'd only seen—— (HEFFTERDINGT *stops her.*)

SCHWARTZE. Has she made the slightest effort to approach her parents? Has she thought of her home with one throb of love? Who will vouch for it that my outstretched hand will not be repulsed with scorn?

HEFFTERDINGT. I will vouch for it.

SCHWARTZE. You? You, above all, have had a proof of her untamable pride.

HEFFTERDINGT (*with embarrassment*). You should not have reminded me of that.

[*Enter* MARIE *with flowers, and* THERESA.

MARIE. Papa, papa, listen to what Theresa— Oh! am I interrupting?

SCHWARTZE (*pulling himself together*). What is it?

MARIE. To-day I got some more flowers; and when I sent Theresa back to the florist's, she found out it was not a man, but a lady, who had ordered them. And she couldn't sell them again; so she brought them back. (*The others exchange glances.*)

HEFFTERDINGT. Tell me, Theresa, did they describe this lady to you?

THERESA. She was tall, with great dark eyes, and there was something very distinguished and foreign about her.

HEFFTERDINGT (*leads* MARIE *to the back of the stage, and lays his hand on* SCHWARTZE'S *arm*). You asked for a token of love!

SCHWARTZE (*staring at the flowers*). From her!

MRS. SCHWARTZE. They must have cost a small fortune!

MARIE. Theresa has something else very wonderful to tell, too.

HEFFTERDINGT. What is it, Theresa? Quick!

THERESA. If the pastor wishes it. When I came back, the porter told me that last evening in the twilight a carriage stopped before the door; there was a lady inside. She didn't get out, but kept watching all the windows of our house where there were lights. And when he went out to ask what she wanted, she said something

to her coachman, and they were gone! (*All show signs of astonishment.*)

HEFFTERDINGT. That's all, Theresa. (*Exit* THERESA.) Pardon us, dear Miss Marie, if we treat you once more like a child, and ask you to leave us alone for a moment.

MARIE. I am so frightened at all this, Pastor. (*Imploringly.*) Papa?

SCHWARTZE. What is it, child?

MARIE. Papa, papa, do you know who this lady is?

SCHWARTZE. I? No. I can only guess.

MARIE (*bursting out*). Magdalene—Magda! Magda is here! (*Falling on her knees.*) Oh, you will forgive her?

SCHWARTZE. Get up, my child. Your sister is far above my poor forgiveness.

HEFFTERDINGT. She is not above your love.

The outcome is that Magda is invited to come and stay in her father's house. She first came, intending only to make a call, as she had a retinue of servants, and preferred the freedom of the hotel. It is Heffterdingt, her old lover, who draws from her both the explanation of her reluctance to accept her family's hospitality, and her consent to do so.

HEFFTERDINGT. What is there in the world which draws you away again after an hour?

MAGDA. I will tell you. I felt it the first minute I came. The paternal authority already stretches its net over me again, and the yoke stands ready beneath which I must bow.

HEFFTERDINGT. But there is neither yoke nor net here. Do not fear shadows. Here are only wide-opened arms which wait to clasp the lost daughter to the empty breast.

MAGDA. Oh, I beg you, none of that. I do not intend to furnish a pendant to the prodigal son. If I came back as a daughter, as a lost daughter, I should not hold my head up before you as I do; I should grovel in the dust in full consciousness of all my sins. (*With growing excitement.*) And that I will not do—that I cannot do—for I am what I am, and I cannot be another. (*Sadly.*) And therefore I have no home—therefore I must go forth again—therefore——

[*Enter* MRS. SCHWARTZE.

HEFFTERDINGT. For Heaven's sake, hush!

MRS. SCHWARTZE. Excuse me, Pastor, I only wanted to know about supper. (*Imploringly to* MAGDA, *who sits turned away with her hands before her face.*) We happen to have a warm joint to-day.

You know, Pastor, the gentlemen of the card-club were to be with us. Now, Magda, whether you're going away or not, can't you eat a mouthful in your father's house?

HEFFTERDINGT. Don't ask now, my dear madam.

MRS. SCHWARTZE. Oh, if I'm interrupting—I only thought——

HEFFTERDINGT. Later.

MARIE (*appearing in the doorway*). Will she stay? (MAGDA *shrinks at the sound of the voice.*)

MRS. SCHWARTZE. 'Sh! (*Exit* MRS. SCHWARTZE *and* MARIE.)

HEFFTERDINGT. You have no home, Miss Magda? Did you hear the old mother beseeching and alluring with the best that she has, though it's only a poor dish? Did you hear Marie's voice trembling with tears in the fear that I should not prevail? They trust me too much; they think I only need to speak the word. They don't suspect how helpless I stand here before you. Look! Behind that door are three people in a fever of sorrow and love. If you cross this threshold, you rob each of them of so much life. And you have no home?

MAGDA. If I have one, it is not here.

HEFFTERDINGT (*embarrassed*). Perhaps— Nevertheless you should not go. Only a few days,—just not to take away the idea that you belong here. So much you owe to them!

MAGDA (*sadly*). I owe nothing now to any one here.

HEFFTERDINGT. No? Really nothing? Then I must tell you about a certain day,—eleven years ago now. I was called into this house in haste, for the Colonel was dying. When I came, he lay there stiff and motionless, his face drawn and white; one eye was already closed, in the other still flickered a little life. He tried to speak, but his lips only quivered and mumbled.

MAGDA. What had happened?

HEFFTERDINGT. What had happened? I will tell you. He had just received a letter in which his eldest daughter bade him farewell.

MAGDA. My God!

HEFFTERDINGT. It was a long time before he recovered from the apoplectic stroke. Only a trembling in the right arm, which you perhaps have noticed, now remains.

MAGDA. That is indeed a debt I owe.

HEFFTERDINGT. Ah, if that were all, Miss Magda! Pardon me, I call you by the name I used long ago. It springs to my lips.

MAGDA. Call me what you like. Go on.

HEFFTERDINGT. The necessary result followed. When he received his discharge,—he will not believe in the cause, don't speak to him of it,—then his mind broke down.

MAGDA. Yes, yes! that is my debt too.

HEFFTERDINGT. Then you see, Miss Magda, began my work. If I speak of it, you must not think I am pluming myself on it to you. What good would that do me? For a long, long time I nursed him, and by degrees I saw his mind revive again. First I let him collect slugs from the rose-bushes.

MAGDA (*with a shudder*). Ugh!

HEFFTERDINGT. Yes, so far had it gone; then I gave him charge of some money, and then I made him my assistant in the institutions with whose management I was intrusted. There is a hospital and a soup-kitchen and an infirmary, and it makes a great deal to be done. So he became a man once more. I have tried to influence your step-mother too; not because I was greedy for power. Perhaps you'll think that of me. In short, the old tension between her and Marie has been slowly smoothed away. Love and confidence have descended upon the house.

MAGDA (*staring at him*). And why did you do all this?

HEFFTERDINGT. Well, first it is my calling. Then I did it for his sake, for I love the old man; and above all—for—your sake. (MAGDA *starts, and points to herself interrogatively.*) Yes, for your sake. For this weighed upon me: The day will come when she will turn homeward,—perhaps as victor; but perhaps also as vanquished, broken and ruined in body and soul— Pardon me these thoughts, I had heard nothing of you— In either case she shall find a home ready for her. That was my work, the work of long years; and now I implore you not to destroy it.

MAGDA (*in anguish*). If you knew through what I have passed, you would not try to keep me.

HEFFTERDINGT. That is all shut out. This is home. Let it alone; forget it.

MAGDA. How can I forget it? How dare I?

HEFFTERDINGT. Why should you resist when all stretch their hands out to you in rejoicing? It's very easy. Let your heart speak when you see all around overflowing with love for you.

MAGDA (*in tears*). You make me a child again. (*A pause.*)

HEFFTERDINGT. Then you will stay?

MAGDA (*springing up*). But they must not question me!

HEFFTERDINGT. Must not question you?

MAGDA. About my life outside there. They wouldn't understand,—none of them; not even you.

HEFFTERDINGT. Well, then, they shan't.

MAGDA. And you will promise me, for yourself and for the others?

HEFFTERDINGT. Yes, I can promise it.

MAGDA (*in a stifled voice*). Call them, then.

HEFFTERDINGT (*opening the door on the left*). She will stay.

[*Enter* MARIE; *then* MRS. SCHWARTZE, FRANZISKA, *and* SCHWARTZE. MARIE *throws herself joyfully into* MAGDA'S *arms.* MRS. SCHWARTZE *also embraces her.*

SCHWARTZE. It was your duty, my child.

But Colonel Schwartze cannot really grasp the idea that his daughter is independent of him; that in the twelve years since he had disowned her she had earned the right to disregard his demands and his standards. The promise he made not to ask his daughter about her life during those years apparently does not remain in his consciousness overnight. The pastor drops in early next morning to help steer the conversation in safe channels, but Schwartze forestalls his efforts.

SCHWARTZE. Good-morning, my dear pastor! Will you go out on the porch for a moment? I will follow you. (*Exit* HEFFTERDINGT.) Now, did you sleep well, my child! (*Kisses her on the forehead.*)

MAGDA. Finely. In my old room I found the old sleep of childhood.

SCHWARTZE. Had you lost it?

MAGDA. Haven't you?

SCHWARTZE. They say a good conscience— Come to me, my child.

MAGDA. Gladly, papa! No, let me sit at your feet. There I can see your beautiful white beard. When I look at it, I always think of Christmas eve and a quiet snow-covered field.

SCHWARTZE. My child, you know how to say pretty things. When you speak, one seems to see pictures about one. Here we are not so clever; that is why we have nothing to conceal here.

MAGDA. We also— But speak quietly, papa.

SCHWARTZE. Yes, I must. You know what agreement you made with the pastor.

MAGDA. Which you will keep?

SCHWARTZE. I am accustomed to keep to what I have promised. But you must see that the suspicion—whatever I may do, the suspicion weighs like a mountain——

MAGDA. What do you suspect?

SCHWARTZE. I don't know. You have appeared among us as

wonderfully, as gloriously. But brilliance and worldly honor and all that don't blind a father's eyes. You seem to be warm at heart too. At least, one would think so to hear you speak. But there is something in your eyes which does not please me, and a scornful curl about your lips.

MAGDA. Dear, good old papa!

SCHWARTZE. You see! This tenderness is not that of a daughter towards her father. It is so that one pets a child, whether it be a young or an old one. And although I'm only a poor soldier, lame and disabled, I demand your respect, my child.

MAGDA. I have never withheld it. (*Rising.*)

SCHWARTZE. That is good, that is good, my daughter. Believe me, we are not so simple as we may appear to you. We have eyes to see, and ears to hear, that the spirit of moral revolt is abroad in the world. The seed which should take root in the heart, begins to decay. What were once sins easily become customs to you. My child, soon you will go away. When you return, you may find me in the grave.

MAGDA. Oh, no, papa!

SCHWARTZE. It's in God's hand. But I implore you—Come here, my child—nearer—so—— (*He draws her down to him, and takes her head between his hands.*) I implore you—let me be happy in my dying hour. Tell me that you have remained pure in body and soul, and then go with my blessing on your way.

MAGDA. I have remained—true to myself, dear father.

SCHWARTZE. How? In good or in ill?

MAGDA. In what—for me—was good.

SCHWARTZE (*blankly*). In what—for you—then?

MAGDA (*rising*). And now don't worry any more. Let me enjoy these few days quietly. They will be over soon enough.

SCHWARTZE (*broodingly*). I love you with my whole heart, because I have sorrowed for you—so long. (*Threateningly, rising.*) But I must know who you are.

MAGDA. Father dear—— (*Bell rings.* MRS. SCHWARTZE *bursts in.*)

MRS. SCHWARTZE. Just think! the ladies of the Committee are here! They want to congratulate us in person. Do you think we ought to offer them coffee, Leopold?

Von Keller comes to call on Magda and it is revealed that he was once her lover, and, though he had not known it until that moment, the father of her child. He is uncertain at first what sort of reception he will meet with and is

relieved, yet puzzled that Magda greets him as an old friend—or at least an old acquaintance. They recall their student days in Berlin:

MAGDA. There in the old attic, five flights up, we three girls lived so merrily in our poverty. Two hired pianos, and in the evening bread and dripping. Emmy used to warm it herself over the oil-stove.

VON KELLER. And Katie with her verses! Good Lord! What has become of them?

MAGDA. *Chi lo sà.* Perhaps they're giving singing lessons, perhaps they're on the stage. Yes, we were a merry set; and when the fun had lasted half a year, one day my lover vanished.

VON KELLER. An unlucky chance, I swear to you. My father was ill. I had to travel. I wrote everything to you.

MAGDA. H'm! I did not reproach you. And now I will tell you why I owe you thanks. I was a stupid, unsuspecting thing, enjoying freedom like a runaway monkey. Through you I became a woman. For whatever I have done in my art, for whatever I have become in myself, I have you to thank. My soul was like—yes, down below there, there used to be an Æolian harp which was left mouldering because my father could not bear it. Such a silent harp was my soul; and through you it was given to the storm. And it sounded almost to breaking,—the whole scale of passions which bring us women to maturity,—love and hate and revenge and ambition (*springing up*), and need, need, need—three times need—and the highest, the strongest, the holiest of all, the mother's love!—All I owe to you!

VON KELLER. What—what do you say?

MAGDA. Yes, my friend, you have asked after Emmy and Katie. But you haven't asked after your child.

VON KELLER (*jumping up and looking about anxiously*). My child!

MAGDA. Your child? Who calls it so? Yours? Ha, ha! Dare to claim portion in him and I'll kill you with these hands. Who are you? You're a strange man who gratified his lust and passed on with a laugh. But I have a child,—my son, my God, my all! For him I lived and starved and froze and walked the streets; for him I sang and danced in concert-halls,—for my child who was crying for his bread! (*Breaks out in a convulsive laugh which changes to weeping, and throws herself on a seat, right.*)

VON KELLER (*after a silence*). I am confounded. If I could have suspected,—yes, if I could have suspected—I will do every-

thing; I will not shrink from any reparation. But now, I beg you to quiet yourself. They know that I am here. If they saw us so, I should be—(*correcting himself*) you would be lost.

MAGDA. Don't be afraid. I won't compromise you.

VON KELLER. Oh, I was not speaking for myself, not at all. But just think, if it were to come out, what the town and your father——

The moment Magda has rushed out of the room her father enters and when Von Keller answers stumblingly his questions about why Magda has rushed away and why Von Keller looks so agitated, the Colonel reverts to the idea which is never far from his consciousness:

SCHWARTZE. You met my daughter some years ago in Berlin?

VON KELLER. Yes.

SCHWARTZE. Councillor von Keller, I know you to be as discreet as you are sensible; but there are cases in which silence is a crime. I ask you—and your life-long relations with me give me the right to ask, as well as the mystery—which just now— In short, I ask you, Do you know anything discreditable about my daughter's life there?

VON KELLER. Oh, for Heaven's sake, how can you——

SCHWARTZE. Do you not know how and where she lived?

VON KELLER. No. I am absolutely——

SCHWARTZE. Have you never visited at her house?

VON KELLER (*More and more confused*). No, no, never, never.

SCHWARTZE. Not once?

VON KELLER. Well, I called on her once; but——

SCHWARTZE. Your relations were friendly?

VON KELLER. Oh, entirely friendly—of course, only friendly. (*A pause.*)

SCHWARTZE (*passes his hand over his forehead, looks earnestly at* VON KELLER; *then, speaking absently*). So? Then, honestly—if it might be—if—if— (*Gets up, goes to* VON KELLER, *and sits down again, trying to quiet himself.*) Dr. von Keller, we both live in a quiet world, where scandals are unknown. But I have grown old, very old. And therefore I can't—can't control my thoughts as I should. And I can't rid myself of an idea which has—suddenly—taken possession of me. I have just had a great joy which I don't want to be embittered. But, to quiet an old man, I beg you—give me your word of honor that——

VON KELLER (*rising*). Pardon me, this seems almost like a cross-examination.

SCHWARTZE. You must know, then, what I——

VON KELLER. Pardon me, I wish to know nothing. I came here innocently to make a friendly visit, and you have taken me by surprise. I will not be taken by surprise. (*Takes his hat.*)

SCHWARTZE. Dr. von Keller, have you thought what this refusal means?

VON KELLER. Pardon me, if you wish to know anything, I beg you to ask your daughter. She will tell you what—what— And now you must let me go. You know where I live. In case—I am very sorry it has happened so: but—Good-day, Colonel. (*Exit.*)

SCHWARTZE (*after brooding for a time*). Magda!

MARIE (*running in anxiously*). For Heaven's sake, what's the matter?

SCHWARTZE (*chokingly*). Magda,—I want Magda.

MARIE (*goes to the door and opens it*). She's coming now—down the stairs.

SCHWARTZE. So! (*Pulls himself together with an effort.*)

MARIE (*clasping her hands*). Don't hurt her! (*Pauses with the door open.* MADGA *is seen descending the stairs. She enters in travelling-dress, hat in hand, very pale, but calm.*)

MAGDA. I heard you call, father.

SCHWARTZE. I have something to say to you.

MAGDA. And I to you.

SCHWARTZE. Go in—into my room.

MAGDA. Yes, father. (*She goes to the door, left.* SCHWARTZE *follows her.* MARIE, *who has drawn back frightened to the dining-room door, makes an unseen gesture of entreaty.*)

The dramatist does not present the interview between Magda and her father. Instead he shows Mrs. Schwartze and Marie listening terrified to angry sounds in an adjoining room, and commenting fearfully upon what can be going on. Presently the Colonel enters the room, and Magda follows a few minutes later:

SCHWARTZE. Yes, what have you—what have you? That is my daughter. What shall I do with my daughter now?

MAGDA (*humbly, almost beseechingly*). Father, isn't it best, after what has happened, that you should let me go,—that you should drive me into the streets? You must get free of me if this house is to be pure again.

SCHWARTZE. So, so, so! You think, then, you have only to go—to go away, out there, and all will be as before? And we?

What will become of us? I—good God!—I—I have one foot in the grave—soon it will be over—but the mother, and your sister—your sister.

MADGA. Marie has the husband she wants——

SCHWARTZE. No one will marry a sister of yours. (*With aversion.*) No, no. Don't think it!

MAGDA (*aside*). My God!

SCHWARTZE (*to* MRS. SCHWARTZE). See, she's beginning now to realize what she has done.

MRS. SCHWARTZE. Yes; what——

MAGDA (*in tender sympathy, but still with a tinge of superiority*). My poor old father—listen to me—I can't change what has passed. I will give Marie half my fortune. I will make up a thousand times all that I have made you suffer to-day. But now, I implore you, let me go my way.

SCHWARTZE. Oho!

MAGDA. What do you want of me? What am I to you? Yesterday at this time you did not know even whether I still lived; and to-day— It is madness to demand that I should think and feel again as you do; but I am afraid of you, father, I'm afraid of you all—ah, I am not myself— (*Breaking out in torment.*) I cannot bear the sorrow.

SCHWARTZE. Ha, ha!

MAGDA. Father dear, I will humble myself before you willingly. I lament with my whole heart that I've brought sorrow to you to-day, for my flesh and blood still belong to you. But I must live out my own life. That I owe to myself,—to myself and mine. Good-by!

SCHWARTZE (*stopping her*). Where are you going?

MAGDA. Let me pass, father.

SCHWARTZE. I'll kill you first. (*Seizes her.*)

MRS. SCHWARTZE. Leopold! (*Enter* HEFFTERDINGT. *He throws himself between them with a cry of horror.* MAGDA, *freed by the old man, goes slowly back, with her eyes fixed on the* PASTOR, *to the seat, left, where she remains motionless.*)

HEFFTERDINGT (*after a silence*). In God's name!

SCHWARTZE. Yes, yes, yes, Pastor—it made a fine family group, eh? Look at her! She has soiled my name. Any scoundrel can break my sword. That is my daughter; that is——

HEFFTERDINGT. Dear Colonel, these are things which I do not understand, and which I do not care to understand. But it seems to me there must be something to do, instead of——

SCHWARTZE. Yes, to do,—yes, yes—there's much to do here. I

have much to do. I don't see why I'm standing here. The worst of it is—the worst of it is, he can say to me—this man—you are a cripple—with your shaking hand—with such a one I can't fight, even if I have had your daughter for a— But I will show him—I will show him— Where is my hat?

MRS. SCHWARTZE. Where are you going, Leopold? (MAGDA *rises.*)

SCHWARTZE. My hat!

MRS. SCHWARTZE (*gives him hat and stick*). Here, here!

SCHWARTZE. So! (*To* MAGDA.) Learn to thank the God in whom you disbelieve, that he has preserved your father until this hour, for he shall bring you back your honor!

MAGDA (*kneeling, and kissing his hand*). Don't do it, father! I don't deserve this of you.

SCHWARTZE (*bends weeping over her head*). My poor, poor child!

Von Keller anticipates the Colonel's move by coming and asking for Magda's hand. She has not the least desire to marry him and only consents to considering that plan after Heffterdingt has convinced her that it is the only way to save her father's peace—his very reason. The happy Colonel leaves Von Keller and Magda together to make arrangements. Von Keller assures Magda that it is a pleasure to him to be able to allow her to help him in his profession. She will, he says, give up her career, of course. "I have every respect for your past triumphs, but *(pompously)* the highest reward to which your feminine ambition can aspire will be achieved in the drawing-room."

MAGDA (*aside*). Good Heaven, this thing I'm doing is mere madness!

VON KELLER. What do you say? (MAGDA *shakes her head.*) And then the wife, the ideal wife, of modern times is the consort, the true, self-sacrificing helper of her husband. For instance, you, by your queenly personality and by the magic of your voice, will overcome my enemies, and knit even my friends more closely to me. And we will be largely hospitable. Our house shall be the centre of the most distinguished society, who still keep to the severely gracious manners of our forefathers. Gracious and severe may seem contradictory terms, but they are not.

MAGDA. You forget that the child on whose account this union is to be consummated will keep the severely inclined away from us.

VON KELLER. Yes, I know, dear Magda, it will be painful for you; but this child must of course remain the deepest secret between us. No one must suspect——

MAGDA (*astounded and incredulous*). What—what do you say?

VON KELLER. Why, it would ruin us. No, no, it is absurd to think of it. But we can make a little journey every year to wherever it is being educated. One can register under a false name; that is not unusual in foreign parts, and is hardly criminal. And when we are fifty years old, and other regular conditions have been fulfilled (*laughing*), that can be arranged, can't it? Then we can, under some pretext, adopt it, can't we?

MAGDA (*breaks into a piercing laugh; then, with clasped hands and staring eyes*). My sweet! My little one! *Mio bambino! Mio povero—bam*—you—you—I am to—ha, ha, ha! (*Tries to open the folding door.*) Go! go!

[*Enter* SCHWARTZE.

SCHWARTZE. What——

MAGDA. Good you're here! Free me from this man, take this man away from me.

SCHWARTZE. What?

MAGDA. I have done everything you demanded. I have humbled myself, I have surrendered my judgment, I have let myself be carried like a lamb to the slaughter. But my child I will not leave. Give up my child to save *his* career! (*Throws herself into a chair.*)

SCHWARTZE. Mr. von Keller, will you please——

VON KELLER. I am inconsolable, Colonel. But it seems that the conditions which for the interest of both parties I had to propose, do not meet the approbation——

SCHWARTZE. My daughter is no longer in the position to choose the conditions under which she— Dr. von Keller, I ask your pardon for the scene to which you have just been subjected. Wait for me at your home. I will myself bring you my daughter's consent. For that I pledge you my word of honor. (*Sensation.* MAGDA *rises quickly.*)

VON KELLER. Have you considered what——

SCHWARTZE (*holding out his hand*). I thank you, Dr. von Keller.

VON KELLER. Not at all. I have only done my duty. (*Exit, with a bow.*)

MAGDA (*stretching herself*). So! Now I'm the old Magda again. (SCHWARTZE *locks the three doors silently.*) Do you think, father, that I shall become docile by being shut up?

SCHWARTZE. So! Now we are alone. No one sees us but He

who sees us—there (*pointing upward*). Quiet yourself, my child. We must talk together.

MAGDA (*sits down*). Good! We can come to an understanding, then,—my home and I.

SCHWARTZE. Do you see that I am now quite calm?

MAGDA. Certainly.

SCHWARTZE. Quite calm, am I not? Even my arm does not tremble. What has happened, has happened. But just now I gave your betrothed——

MAGDA. My betrothed?— Father dear!

SCHWARTZE. I gave your betrothed my word of honor. And that must be kept, don't you see?

MAGDA. But if it is not in your power, my dear father.

SCHWARTZE. Then I must die,—then I must simply die. One cannot live on when one— You are an officer's daughter. Don't you understand that?

MAGDA (*compassionately*). My God!

SCHWARTZE. But before I die, I must set my home in order, must I not? Every one has something which he holds sacred. What is sacred to your inmost soul?

MAGDA. My art.

The Colonel then tells Magda that either she will redeem the honor of his house by marrying Von Keller, or he will kill first her and then himself. When Magda lets him know that Von Keller has not been her only lover, and so it is perhaps not fair to him to let him make her his wife, the Colonel tries to shoot her, and is only prevented by a stroke of apoplexy from which he dies a few moments later.

Bahr and Schnitzler

Aside from Hauptmann and Sudermann the German dramatists most familiar to American readers and theatergoers, are Bahr, Wedekind and Schnitzler, not that these are necessarily the greatest, but that their works have been translated. Hermann Bahr is known for his amusing comedy *The Concert*, a play whose hero, the philandering musician, Hein, was acted in America by Leo Ditrichstein. Critics declare that this is the best modern German comedy, but as those same critics declare that Germany does not produce writers of great comedy, the praise is less eloquent than the mere statement implies. The plot is perfectly hackneyed, but new plots are not essential to fine work. The truthful characterization and amusing, yet never unnaturally brilliant, dialogue make this play a pleasure to read. Although, as has been pointed out, literature and drama are not interchangeable terms, and the play which is inspiring to read may not be successful on the stage, yet literary merit is an element in the permanence of drama.

Wedekind is preoccupied with the erotic. He has written one play, *Spring's Awakening*, which presents a real problem of modern life, but for the most part his works deal with material which the generality of people feel should be treated in the textbooks on social hygiene and the psychopathic clinic. A work of art which shocks the beholders, fails to convey its artistic message completely. If the shock awakens one to perception of new values, well and good. But though the painter, Turner, Whistler, Manet, or Cezanne, may hang up his canvas and let it educate the public, the dramatist cannot work in that fashion. Just in proportion as a play excites the curiosity of the audience because its content has been condemned, it is likely to miss making the artistic impression the writer had in mind. Hauptmann's *Weavers* is an example of this. The censor at first forbade the production of the work, on the ground that it was a blow at the safety of the established

order. When the ban was lifted, people went to it to hear something revolutionary. The artistic novelty was lost sight of in the eagerness to hear something which the censor had condemned. The perception that Hauptmann had created a new style of drama by reproducing the speech of actual life, and by depicting the conditions and feeling and atmosphere of life rather than some story in action was only for the discerning few.

Wedekind's insistence on treating the complicated question of sex naturalistically may be a significant movement of modern drama, but for the present, the rank and file of readers cannot sufficiently free themselves from the ideas which have dominated our society for at least six hundred years to find his plays anything except studies in eroticism.

Schnitzler is pre-eminently an artist. There are critics who assert that as Hauptmann is unquestionably the greatest of modern German dramatists, Schnitzler is just as surely the second greatest. Reading the works of this playwright, one feels that only in the language he speaks, does he belong with the Germans. As he was born in Vienna, "the Paris of the South," this is not surprising. The critic, Ashley Dukes, remarked: "The Austrian and the German drama are often confused. In reality they have nothing in common but language, and the difference between them may be measured by the difference between the spirit of Berlin and the spirit of Vienna."

The Viennese dramatist is a physician, born in 1862. His scientific training would naturally incline him to the naturalistic method of exact observation and authentic reproduction. But Schnitzler is too much of an artist merely to reproduce. Instead he transmutes his material into something which catches the poetry of life. His subject is always the same: an amorous intrigue. The situations he depicts are immoral, but the delicacy and taste with which he presents them make them rather unmoral. Love is the eternal quest of man, and it eternally eludes him, as do his other ideals, fame and ambition. Oscar Wilde's brilliant epigram "There are two tragedies in life: not getting what one wants and getting it" might be taken

as the sum of Schnitzler's philosophy, though generally his tragedies are rather tragi-comedies. Lewisohn thus characterizes Schnitzler's fashion of presenting a tragedy: "To grasp one's illusions, like the golden leaves in the fairy tale, and find them autumn foliage, sere and wind-blown. That is the deepest experience of all the characters of Schnitzler from *Anatol* (1890) to *Das Weite Land* (1910). Love and delight and even sorrow slip from us on our solitary path; we yearn for the reality of enduring spiritual values, and are lost amid the impermanence of dreams. And, therefore, Schnitzler's men and women, even in the pursuit of their dearest illusions, are touched with sadness. Pensively they walk in these Viennese gardens which their creator loves to delineate—discoursing of love and death. The light there is never radiant, the darkness never sombre, a mild wind stirs the tops of the slender poplars that stand against the fading orange of the evening sky."[r]

The admirer of Schnitzler recognizes in Mr. Lewisohn's paragraph a characterization of the dramatist's work which rivals those works themselves in the atmosphere it creates. Indeed, perhaps the average reader finds more glamour in the critic's description than in the playwright's creations.

[r] Lewisohn. *Modern Drama:* 157; Huebsch, 1916.

From Schnitzler's Anatol

The Anatol series is a group of one-act plays, each of which is the end of a romance. In the *Modern Library* edition of *Anatol and Other Plays,* Ashley Dukes sums up the substance and significance of Anatol's adventures.

"His subject is always the same—the lover and a mistress or two. It is treated gracefully enough, with little passion and much gentle melancholy, little humor and much wit. His power lies chiefly in the creation of an atmosphere—a dim twilight atmosphere as of autumn evenings crowded with reminiscence. It is indescribably charming and completely aimless; a dream world as magical as that of any symbolist, yet unsymbolic. Tragic problems arise from time to time, as in *Der einsame Weg* or *Der Ruf des Lebens,* but for the most part Schnitzler moves upon the plane of comedy. The crisis arrives, the catastrophe occurs; but it is an intimately personal catastrophe, accepted with ironical resignation by the aristocrat-hero, and added with a sigh to his repertory of experience."

Questioning Fate is the story of Anatol's experiment in hypnotizing Cora. His friend Max, who appears in so many of these little vignettes, has been expressing his wonder at Anatol's possession of this power, and as Anatol is miserable through doubts of Cora's fidelity, Max proposes that Anatol hypnotize her and ask her the fateful question. Anatol is delighted with the plan and when Cora arrives he proceeds to put it into execution:

Anatol. Sleep now—calmly— (*To* Max) Now I shall ask her——

Max. How old is she?

Anatol. Nineteen—Cora, how old are you?

Cora. Twenty-one.

Max. Aha!

Anatol. Hush—that's remarkable—you can see how——

Max. If she'd known she was such a good medium——!

ANATOL. The suggestion is taking effect. I shall question her further. Cora, do you love me?

CORA. Yes.

ANATOL (*triumphant*). Did you hear that?

MAX. And now the main question—whether she is true to you.

ANATOL. Cora— (*Turning.*) That's a stupid question.

MAX. Why?

ANATOL. You can't ask it that way—I must word the question differently.

MAX. I should think it was sufficiently explicit.

ANATOL. No, that's just the trouble, it is not explicit enough.

MAX. In what way?

ANATOL. If I ask, "Are you true to me," she may understand that in its widest significance.

MAX. Well?

ANATOL. She'll think back over her whole past—she'll think possibly of a time when she loved someone else, and she would answer no.

MAX. That would be rather interesting, too.

ANATOL. Thanks! I realize that Cora knew other men before she met me—she herself told me that she had dreamed she was to meet me—then——

MAX. But she didn't dream it?

ANATOL. No.

MAX. As to your question——

ANATOL. Yes, this question—it's too crude—in the wording, anyway.

MAX. Then put it this way, "Cora, have you been true to me since you have known me?"

ANATOL. Hm—that's better. (*To* CORA.) Cora, have you been—but that's absurd, too.

MAX. Absurd?

ANATOL. Why, yes. Consider the way we met—we didn't dream we should come to love each other so madly. We both thought, those first days, that it was merely a passing episode—who knows——

MAX. Who knows what?

ANATOL. Who knows, if she did not first come to love me—when she had ceased to love someone else? What experience did this girl live through before I met her—before we exchanged our first words? Could she cut loose from it all at once? Did she not, perhaps, have to drag the old chains about with her, for days and weeks?——

MAX. Hm. . . .

ANATOL. I will go further—at first it was only a caprice to her as it was to me. Neither of us thought of it as anything else, neither of us demanded anything from the other more than a sweet fleeting happiness. If she did wrong at that time—can I reproach her for it?

MAX. How magnanimous you are.

ANATOL. Oh, no—but I should consider it indecent to take any such advantage of the present situation.

MAX. That's noble of you. But maybe I can help you out. (ANATOL *looks his question.*) Why not put it this way, "Cora, have you been true to me since you have loved me?"

ANATOL. That sounds quite clear.

MAX. Well?

ANATOL. But it isn't clear at all.

MAX. Oh, indeed!

ANATOL. True! What does that word mean, anyway? Now suppose, let us say—suppose she was in a railway train yesterday, and a man sitting opposite touched the tip of her foot with his. It is not at all impossible that, with the greatly increased perceptiveness characteristic of sleep and in the highly sensitized condition of the medium's mind during the hypnosis——, it is not at all impossible that she might regard this incident as an infidelity.

MAX. Oh, see here——

ANATOL. All the more since she knows my—probably exaggerated point of view on this subject from many conversations we have had. I've said to her, "Cora, if you even look at another man it's an infidelity towards me."

MAX. And she?

ANATOL. She laughed and asked how I could believe that she would even look at another man.

MAX. And yet you believed——

ANATOL. Accidents can happen. Imagine—for instance, an impertinent fellow follows her some evening and kisses her on the neck.

MAX. Well—that——

ANATOL. Well, that's not impossible.

MAX. Then you don't really want to question her?

ANATOL. Why, yes—but——

MAX. All this you've been saying is perfect rot. Believe me, women never misunderstand when we ask them if they've been true to us. And if you whisper to her tenderly, affectionately, "Are you true to me?" she won't think of any man's foot or any im-

pertinent kiss on the neck, she'll think of just what we usually mean when we talk of infidelity. And, besides, in this case, you have the added advantage of being able to ask further questions which will make her answer quite clear.

ANATOL. Then you insist that I shall question her?

MAX. I? Why, *you* wanted to know——

ANATOL. But I've just thought of something——

MAX. What is it?

ANATOL. The Unconscious.

MAX. The Unconscious?

ANATOL. I believe in states of unconsciousness——

MAX. Do you?

ANATOL. Such a condition can grow out of itself, as it were, but it can also be brought about by artificial means—by means that dull, or unduly exhilarate, the senses.

MAX. Please explain.

ANATOL. Imagine a dim room, full of shadows—mysterious——

MAX. Dim—mysterious—I'm imagining it.

ANATOL. And in this room—she—and another.

MAX. But how did she get there?

ANATOL. I'll leave that question open. There are excuses—enough that it could and does happen. And then—a few glasses of Rhine wine—the air strangely heavy—the scent of cigarettes—the fragrance of perfumed hangings—a pale light through frosted glass and red silk—silence—solitude—sweet whispered words—(*gesture from* MAX)—many others have yielded there—stronger, calmer than she.

MAX. Probably. Still the fact that she should be in such a room with another man doesn't quite agree with my idea of fidelity.

ANATOL. Life is full of enigmas.

MAX. Well, friend, you have the solution of one of those enigmas which have puzzled the most brilliant men for ages, in your own hands: you need only speak, and you will know all that you wish to know. One question—and you will know whether you are one of the few who are really loved exclusively—or you can learn who your rival is and how he won his victory over you—and yet you will not speak this word. You have been permitted to question Fate—and you will not. You torture yourself day and night, you'd give half your life for the truth, and yet when it lies before you, you will not stoop to pick it up. And why not? Because it might happen that a woman whom you love is really just as you would have her, in *all* your imaginings, and because your illusion is a thousand times dearer to you than the truth. Enough of

this trifling now. Wake the girl up, and be satisfied with the proud consciousness that you—might have accomplished a mircle.

In *Episode,* Anatol, about to leave town, confides to Max's care the souvenirs of his many past loves. When Max asks him why, since they are all past, he does not burn them, Anatol replies that he can't because he still remembers every one of them. In particular he remembers the "episode" of Bianca—a circus rider whom Max, too, had known. But Anatol insists that Max could not understand, or at least could not have such experiences as he has. He is quite overcome with sympathy for Bianca, who, he declares, has never forgotten their brief time together. "She was just another of those over whom my path led me. The word came to me then—that arid word 'Episode'—and yet I seemed to feel myself as something eternal. I knew this poor child would never lose the memory of this hour. I had never felt so sure of it as in just this case. Oh, I often realize that by next morning I shall be quite forgotten. But this was different." He expatiates upon the sad fact that though he was all the world to this girl, he knew then that she was to him just an Episode.

When Max refuses to be impressed by Anatol's description of the red-and-green shaded lamp, and the improvised music which made the atmosphere of the scene, Anatol says: "You have never discovered the secret of true love." It is, he explains to his friend, in the mood: "The rest of you blunder into an adventure brutally, with your eyes open, but your soul shut tight, and you never see its colors. My spirit sheds a thousand lights and colors over it, and I can *feel,* where you only possess."

To this Max replies: "A well-spring of delight surely, this spirit of yours. All whom you love dip into it and bring up for you a strange fragrance of adventure and mystery on which you may intoxicate yourself. . . . But as far as your circus-rider is concerned, you can hardly make me believe, she had these same feelings—under the red-green light, as you did."

Anatol, however, is sure that as Max had never been her lover, but only her friend, he could not know. When Max reveals that he is expecting Bianca that very evening

and advises Anatol to avoid the meeting, Anatol refuses. To Max's suggestion that Bianca may have forgotten the "episode" Anatol replies that the idea is ridiculous, for "that was one of the immortal hours."

MAX. I hear steps outside.

ANATOL. Is it she already?

MAX. You'd better go out through my bedroom.

ANATOL. I'm not such a fool.

MAX. Then you're really willing to have all the charm spoiled?

ANATOL. I shall stay here. (*Knock at the door.*)

MAX. You'd better go. (ANATOL *shakes his head.*) Then go back there—where she won't see you right away—here, this will do. (*Pushes* ANATOL *to the fireplace where he is partially hidden by the screen.*)

ANATOL (*leaning against the mantel*). Oh, very well. (*There is a knock.*)

MAX. Come in.

BIANCA (*coming in quickly*). Good evening, dear Max. Here I am.

MAX (*with both hands outstretched*). Good evening, Bianca, this is mighty nice of you.

BIANCA. You got my letter? You're the very first—you're the only one anyway.

MAX. You can imagine how proud I am!

BIANCA. And how are all the others? Is the crowd still together? Will we meet after the performance evenings, as usual?

MAX (*helping her with her hat and coat*). There were some evenings when you didn't join us.

BIANCA. After the performance?

MAX. Yes, when you disappeared immediately after the performance.

BIANCA (*smiling*). Yes—but that's natural—you know, it's awfully nice to hear that said to you without any jealousy. A girl needs such friends as you are.

MAX. Yes, I should think so.

BIANCA. Friends who like you but don't torture you.

MAX. That doesn't happen to you often, does it?

BIANCA (*catches a glimpse of* ANATOL). But you're not alone? (ANATOL *comes forward and bows.*)

MAX. It's an old acquaintance.

BIANCA (*with her lorgnette at her eyes*). Ah— (ANATOL *bows, looks at her expectantly.*)

MAX. Well, what do you say to this surprise, Bibi?

BIANCA (*embarrassed, searching her memory*). Why, of course —we know each other——

ANATOL. Surely—Bianca.

BIANCA. Why, yes—we know each other very well——

ANATOL (*takes her hand with both of his, excited*). Bianca——

BIANCA. Why, yes—where did we meet? Let me see—oh, yes——

MAX. Then you remember?

BIANCA. Why, of course—it was in St. Petersburg?

ANATOL (*dropping her hand*). No—it was not in St. Petersburg, Miss Bianca. (*He turns to go out.*)

BIANCA (*hastily, aside to* MAX). What's the matter? Have I offended him? (ANATOL *goes out.*)

MAX. He's gone, you see.

BIANCA. But what does this mean?

MAX. Didn't you recognize him?

BIANCA. Why, yes—I recognized him—but I can't just remember—where and when——

MAX. Why, Bibi—it was Anatol.

BIANCA. Anatol? Anatol?

MAX. Yes, Anatol—music—red-green lamp shade—here in the city—about three years ago.

BIANCA. Oh, my goodness, where were my eyes! Anatol! (*Runs to the door.*) I must call him back. (*Opens the door, runs out into the hall, calls.*) Anatol! Anatol! (MAX *stands there smiling until she comes back.*)

MAX. Well?

BIANCA (*coming in*). He must be out in the street already. (*Opens the window quickly.*) There he is.

MAX (*at window, behind her*). Yes, there he is.

BIANCA (*calls*). Anatol!

MAX. He doesn't hear you.

These scenes are typical of the whole seven in Anatol's butterfly existence. Chandler says "the essential immorality of most of these scenes is obvious, yet the scenes themselves scarcely offend, because of the art and the humor with which they are painted." Later he adds a criticism of them from the standpoint of dramatic construction: "If Anatol's adventures express to perfection the mood of decadent Vienna, and if they are technically of interest as composing a cycle of one-act plays, they are

lacking in the element of conflict, and their art is fictional, not dramatic; it is the art of the short-story rather than the art of the stage." Since naturalistic drama, in Chandler's own description, "chooses background, atmosphere and mood in lieu of action," perhaps Anatol may claim a place in the modified drama of naturalism. It is at least the work of an artist, even though that work is expended upon unimportant material. One cannot feel that Anatol and his lights-o'-love are people whose lives should engage the profound interest which great dramatic characters call forth, be that interest rooted in pity or amusement. One critic humorously suggests that Schnitzler's work will have historic interest, as a record of a Vienna which has vanished in the wreck which Versailles made of old Europe.

Somewhat different is the mood of *Last Masks*. In the ward of a public hospital an unsuccessful journalist lies within sight of death. An actor, Florian, who has only a week to live, though he does not know his fate, gives Rademacher, the journalist, an idea. When Florian invites Rademacher to come to see the first play he gives after he recovers, the journalist replies that it will hardly be possible for him to attend the theater. But Florian, understanding what the refusal implies, urges Rademacher to follow his example:

FLORIAN. Nonsense. You have to exert your will-power, that's all. Do you know how I made myself well again? (RADEMACHER *looks at him.*) You needn't look at me like that—I'm nearly well anyway. I simply wouldn't allow any sad thoughts to come up in my mind.

RADEMACHER. How did you prevent it?

FLORIAN. I thought of all the people who'd ever made me angry and I said the nastiest things I knew to them—in my thoughts. That's a great comfort, let me tell you. I even figured out whom I wanted to haunt when I was dead. There's a fellow critic of yours in Olmütz—a malicious beast—and then the manager who docked half my salary because I extemporized—and the audience laughing at *me* all the time and not at the fool play—he ought to have been grateful to me, instead of which—well, just wait! I have a talent for appearing, as a ghost or anything else,—

Arthur Schnitzler

I could make a decent income even in heaven. I'd take a job with the Spiritualists.

This gives Rademacher his idea. He will persuade the doctor to bring Weihgast, the old companion, who has risen to success, to the hospital, and say to him the things which will turn Weihgast's happiness to shame and bitterness. He addresses Florian excitedly.

RADEMACHER. I want to show my gratitude. It was you gave me this idea—yes, you. You shall be my heir. The key of my desk is under my pillow. You don't expect much, eh? Who knows? You may be mistaken—there may be masterpieces hidden there. Why, I feel better and better. Perhaps I may even get well again.

FLORIAN. Of course you will.

RADEMACHER. If I do get well—if ever I set foot outside of this hospital alive, I swear I'll begin all over again.

FLORIAN. Begin what?

RADEMACHER. I'll begin the fight again—I won't give up yet—I'm not so old—only fifty-four. That's no age at all, when a man's well and strong. And I am Somebody, Florian Jackwerth, I am Somebody—you can believe it. But I've had hard luck. I'm as good as many another who rides the high horse, my dear sir. I can measure myself with many another who thinks he's greater than I, because he's been more fortunate. (*Feverishly.*) If he only comes—if he only comes—oh, Lord God, I pray You—even if You have let me shift for myself these fifty-four years—I pray You now—give me strength for this last half hour, strength to even up as well as I can. Let me see him sitting there before me—pale, crushed—as small before me now as he has felt himself superior all his life. Yes, my dear Jackwerth, the man I am waiting for is a friend of my youth. Twenty-five years ago—even twenty years ago—we were fond of each other, for we had begun at the same level. But we went different ways—he—higher and higher—and I—lower and lower. And today he is rich and famous and I'm a poor devil of a journalist dying in a public hospital. But what does that matter?—what does that matter—now that the moment has come when I can crush him? And I *will* crush him—if he only comes—if he only comes. That was your sweetheart who came to see you this afternoon, Jackwerth—I know it. But what is all the ardor with which we wait for the coming of one we love—compared to the longing for someone we hate, someone we've hated all our lives—only we've forgotten to tell him so!

FLORIAN. You mustn't let yourself get so excited, Mr. Rademacher. You're losing your voice.

RADEMACHER. Don't worry—once he is here I'll be able to talk.

FLORIAN. Oh, you never can tell. Say, listen, Mr. Rademacher—I have a suggestion to make. Suppose we have a rehearsal? No, I'm not joking—I know—that's my business. Don't you see—it all depends on *how* you say things! What good will it do you if you say to him, "You are a rascal and I hate you"? that won't get over. He'll think to himself, "Let him scold, that's cheap, while he's here in bed with 103 degrees of fever and I'm walking about smoking a good cigar."

RADEMACHER. Oh, I'll have something more to say to him. No one minds being called a rascal nowadays. But if I tell him that he was ridiculous all his life, ridiculous in the eyes of those he loved most—he won't get over that so easily.

FLORIAN. All right, talk it out—talk it out. Now imagine I'm your friend. Here I stand, pockets full of money, head full of conceit. (*Acting.*) Well, here I am, old friend, you have something to say to me? Well? (*In his natural voice.*) There now, go on.

RADEMACHER (*feverish, talking himself into angry excitement*). Yes, I sent for you. But not to bid you farewell, in memory of our old friendship—no—I have something to tell you—before it is too late.

FLORIAN (*acting*). Don't keep me in suspense, old man. What is it you want to tell me? (*Change as before.*) Well—go on—go on.

RADEMACHER. You think yourself better than I? My dear friend, you and I are not of the Great, and in the depths where we belong there is small difference—in hours like these. All your greatness is sham and pretense. Your fame? Merely a heap of newspaper notices that will be scattered to the winds the day after your death. Your friends? Flatterers who cringe to success; envious parasites who clench their fists at you when your back is turned; fools who find you just small enough for their admiration. But you are clever enough to realize all this yourself, at times. I didn't trouble you to come here just to tell you that. What I am going to tell you—it may be despicable of me—but it's astonishing how little we care whether we are despicable or not when we know we'll have no tomorrow to be ashamed of it in. . . . (*Rises.*) I've come near throwing it in your face a hundred times during the past few years—whenever we chanced to meet on the street and your were gracious enough to stop for a few words with me. My dear friend, not only do I know you as you are—and hun-

dreds of others do, too—but your own beloved wife knows you better than you dream. She realized what you were twenty years ago—in the prime of your youth and success. Yes, she realized it—and I knew that she did—for I was her lover two whole years. Many a time she came to me in disgust at your hollowness, your utter nothingness—came to me ready to run off with me. But I was poor and she was a coward—and so she stayed with you—and deceived you. It was easier that way, for all of us.

FLORIAN (*acting*). Ha! Wretch! You lie!

RADEMACHER. I? (*As if awakening.*) Ah, yes—you take the key, Jackwerth. If he won't believe me, the letters are in my desk. You shall be my executor. There are many things in my desk—some treasures, perhaps. Who knows? It may be only necessary for me to die—to have them appreciated. Yes, then they'd make a fuss about me, especially when they know that I've died in poverty and misery—for I am dying in poverty and misery, as I have lived. Then there'll be speeches over my grave—you'll hear them talk about devotion to duty—great ability—a victim to his profession. Yes, that's true, Florian Jackwerth, as long as I've had any profession I've been its victim. Do you know what's killing me? No—not those Latin names on the board up there. Oh, no—what's killing me is the bitterness of having to bow to people I despise, having to toady to them for a job—it's disgust at having to write things I did not believe to keep myself from starving: it's anger at having to grind out stuff for infamous slave-drivers who had stolen and swindled a fortune for themselves, and I had to help them do it with my talent. But I can't complain. I've received my share of the general contempt and hatred for them—my share of *that,* if of nothing else. (*The* NURSE *comes in again.*)

But when Weihgast comes, eager to be of help, reproaching his old friend for not calling on him before, Rademacher does not go through the scene he and Florian rehearsed. When the doctor, who had arranged the meeting at Rademacher's urgent entreaty, asked, "Was what your friend had to say really so important?" Weihgast replied, "Not in the least. We knew each other well, many years ago, and he merely wanted to see me again. But I think my coming has quieted him."

To the puzzled Florian, whose trained eye had failed to read the expected record of chagrin on Weihgast's face,

Rademacher said: "What have people like you and me to do with those who will be alive tomorrow?"

Schnitzler's most serious play is *The Green Cockatoo.* The name of the play is taken from a wine room—perhaps today it would be a cabaret, but the time of the play is 1789, and the place is Paris. Prospère, the host of this resort, was formerly manager of a theater. Naturally his new place of business is frequented by the stage folk, and they help to make it popular with the nobles: somewhat in the fashion that the professional woman entertainer attracts patronage in modern night clubs and the like. However, the particular species of entertainment which Prospère's actor-guests provided is explained to a newcomer, Lebrêt, a tailor. Grasset, who has introduced him to this new place, is a philosopher:

LEBRÊT. But I don't understand a word of it all.

GRASSET. I told you that Prospère was my former manager. He is still acting here with his troupe, but not in the usual way. My former colleagues sit round here and pretend to be criminals. Do you understand? They tell hair-raising stories that never happened—they speak of awful deeds which they never committed—and the audience that assembles to hear them enjoys the sensation of sitting in the same room with the most dangerous scum of Paris—with swindlers, thieves, and murderers.

LEBRÊT. What sort of an audience is it?

PROSPÈRE. The most fashionable people of Paris——

GRASSET. Noblemen——

PROSPÈRE. Gentlemen of the Court——

LEBRÊT. Down with them!

GRASSET. This is something to their taste—this whips up their jaded senses. Yes—this is where I began, Lebrêt, this is where I made my first speech, in pretended jest—and this is where I began to hate the dogs as they sat here with us—with their fine clothes, their perfumes, their rottenness. And I am well pleased, my good Lebrêt, that you should see the place from whence your great friend went forth to larger things—— (*In a changed tone.*) Say, Prospère, if there should be any slip——

PROSPÈRE. Slip? How?

GRASSET. In my political career—would you engage me again?

PROSPÈRE. Not at any price.

GRASSET (*easily*). Why not? Don't you think there could be a chance for anyone beside your belovèd Henri?

PROSPÈRE. Apart from that—I'd be afraid you would forget yourself some day and really attack one of my paying customers——

GRASSET (*flattered*). That might be possible——

PROSPÈRE. I—I can control myself.

GRASSET. Of a truth, Prospère, I could admire your self-control—did I not happen to know that you are a coward.

PROSPÈRE. My dear friend, I am satisfied with my own way of doing things. I find sufficient pleasure in telling them my true opinion of them, to their very faces—in reviling them to my heart's desire—while they look upon it as a joke. That, too, is a way of relieving one's feelings. (*He draws a dagger and turns it to catch the light.*)

LEBRÊT. What does this mean, Citizen Prospère?

GRASSET. Don't be afraid, I wager the dagger is not even sharpened.

PROSPÈRE. You might lose your wager, friend. The day will come when the joke turns to bitter earnest—and I am ready for it.

GRASSET. That day is near! It is a great age we live in. Come, citizen Lebrêt, we must join the others. Farewell, Prospère—you will see me as one of the great ones—or never again!

LEBRÊT (*staggering*). As one of the great—or—never. (*They both go out.*)

PROSPÈRE (*seats himself on a table, reads from one of the pamphlets*). "The beast is in the noose, strangle it." Not bad, little Desmoulins. "Never was richer booty for a conqueror—forty thousand palaces and castles, two-fifths of all the wealth in France, will be the reward of bravery—those who think themselves the conquerors will be overthrown, and the nation will be purged."

The foremost of the actor-entertainers is Henri, married to the entrancing Leocadie, also an actress. Leocadie is the mistress of the Duke de Cadignan, but Henri does not know that, though the others do. On the evening of July 14, 1789, a group of society folk asking for "thrills" have come into the Green Cockatoo. Prospère serves them wine, with these words: "Here is your wine. I wish it were poison, but I am not permitted to give you that yet—canaille." For a time the lesser actors amuse the company, but presently Henri comes in and tells that he has murdered his wife's lover, the Duke de Cadignan. Pros-

père believes that Henri is telling a true story instead of acting, for of course he knew that the Duke was the lover of Leocadie. He whispers to Henri, urging him to flee, and when the nobles notice, he speaks aloud, pretending that he is playing up to Henri. The latter is puzzled, for being an experienced actor, he perceives in Prospère's manner something that does not quite belong in a play.

Throughout the scene there is heard the noise outside in the streets—that fateful cry which was to echo around the world. Just as Henri says to Prospère, "It is you or I that is mad now," the door opens and some citizens announce that the Bastille has fallen. When Prospère and his friends have grasped this news the host tells the new arrivals that Henri has murdered the Duke, whereupon they congratulate him because now the people of Paris have seized the power for themselves. Prospère says: "You need have no fear now. You can shout it out for all the world to hear. An hour ago, I could have told you myself that your wife was the Duke's mistress—by God I was near telling you—you—you—Bellowing Brimstone, you—we knew it, didn't we?"

Just then the Duke enters and the actors realize that Henri has been acting and that they have given away a secret. Henri springs upon the Duke and stabs him. The idle nobility scurry out frightened, and the habitués of the Green Cockatoo celebrate the triumph of liberty.

This is a skillfully devised melodrama, full of what is termed dramatic irony. This means that a character or even a group of characters in the play are unaware of something which the audience knows; something which would make them act and talk quite differently if they did know it. To begin with the whole situation is ironic, as Prospère makes plain.

The meaning of the "lines" which Prospère's entertainers recite is one thing to the noble patrons and something else to the actors. So Henri's representation of how he killed the Duke is a play to him, but a recital of fact to his friends. And there is the final irony of the idle society folk being amused by prophecies of their downfall while the French Revolution is beginning outside.

Bahr's "The Concert"

Marie Hein, wife of the famous musician, Gustav Hein, treated her husband very much as one does a charming, but willful child. She looked after him and allowed him to enjoy the flattering adoration of his pupils undisturbed. She was even calm when he went away to give unannounced "concerts," but at last she decided that the time had come to call a halt, particularly as circumstances made it advisable for her to interfere. The pupils, all but one, had assembled at Hein's studio for their usual lecture, only to be told that the master was going away to give a concert; that the secretary had been instructed to notify them.

One particularly infatuated pupil, Mrs. Eva Gerndl, became suspicious when Delphina Jura did not appear with the rest of them, to be told that the master was going away, and by a little investigation she found that Delphina was going away too. She had already discovered that it was to his hunting lodge that Gustav Hein went on these "concert" tours, so she put things together, and acted upon her suspicions. She telegraphed Mr. Jura that his wife had gone to Gustav Hein's hunting lodge with him, and then fearful that the irate Jura would rush forth and kill Hein, she went in trembling excitement to Marie Hein and told what she had done. Marie's reception of the news was characteristic:

Marie. You wired Mr. Jura that my husband has gone away with Mrs. Jura up to our cabin?

Eva (*nodding quickly*). Yes.

Marie. Now if Mr. Jura gets the telegram and it just happens that his wife is really not at home——

Eva (*involuntarily, quickly*). She isn't at home, because, of course——

Marie (*continuing imperturbably*). And further, if Mr. Jura thinks so ill of his wife and trusts her so little that he doesn't simply throw the telegram into the waste-basket——

Eva (*very quickly*). Out of the question! No man will do that. And he must know his wife.

Marie (*continuing imperturbably*). Well then, then Mr. Jura

will take an automobile, drive to the canyon, be there in three hours, and then walk from there to the cabin which he can easily do in an hour, by a perfectly beautiful path; and the cabin will be empty, and that will be a good lesson to him, to teach him that a man who believes every silly calumny merely makes himself ridiculous. For the cabin will be empty, of course. Didn't my husband tell me he had a concert? Or do you think my husband lies to me and deceives me?

EVA (*very quickly*). No, no.

MARIE. Well, then.

EVA. But if perhaps, after all—if by some unhappy chance . . .

MARIE. What kind of chance?

EVA. I just mean, you don't know this fearful woman, and the Master in his goodness of heart—who knows——

MARIE. Ah, you mean if the cabin——

EVA (*hastily*). Yes, if the cabin were not——

MARIE. If the cabin were not empty?

EVA (*tensely*). Yes.

MARIE. If my husband had lied to me? If my husband were a wretch?

EVA (*adjuring her*). Oh, you don't know how dangerous this person is. She has simply ensnared the Master.

MARIE (*coolly, slowly*). In that case Mr. Jura will kill his wife, or my husband, or both, depending on his temperament.

EVA (*shutting both ears*). Horrible!

MARIE (*coolly, almost to caricature*). In that case, of course, I can do nothing. And I must say plainly that a man who deceives me— (*Breaks off with a shrug and a disdainful gesture; then in a different tone.*) And I can say that the more calmly, as of course I am quite certain that my husband is not deceiving me. Don't you think so?

EVA (*wholly forgetting herself, impetuously*). But, Mrs. Hein, then I must tell you—— (*Stops, frightened.*)

MARIE. What? What could you tell me? We have been married eleven years. In that time I surely ought to have noticed something? Don't you think so? (EVA *stares at her and can say nothing.*)

MARIE (*amused by her embarrassment*). But say your say. What were you going to tell me?

EVA (*shakes her head quite at a loss*). No, no. Nothing, nothing really.

When Jura calls a few minutes after Marie has got rid of Eva, Mrs. Hein keeps on the same impenetrable armor,

Belasco Historical Collection

DAVID BELASCO DIRECTING REHEARSAL IN "TIGER ROSE"

and Jura wears one equally perfect. Their wits and social poise clothe them in chain mail so that they move freely over the difficult ground and hurl pointed shafts of comment and information at each other, which apparently simply glance off and fall harmlessly to the ground. Jura's armor is an apparently childlike directness combined with anything but childlike keenness of perception and ability to meet the varying moods of his companion; Marie's is the manner of a woman of the world. As both are kindly, tolerant and unselfish as well as sensible persons they manage to concoct a plan of offering their respective spouses the chance to be sensible and generous. Instead of announcing baldly that Mrs. Jura has gone away with Mr. Hein, and suggesting that Mrs. Hein and Mr. Jura follow them, the forsaken husband begins by telling Marie that he has come to her because he has perceived that she is clever—"not with the head for that is no good." He wants to get clear in his mind what he ought to do, and with her permission he is going to do his thinking in her presence. "Proper thought demands that one think out loud.... When I don't know what to do I ask somebody, but not to learn something from his answer: when I ask him the answer comes to me of its own accord," he declares. He talks as though Marie were not in the least concerned, and only after he has figured out what he ought to do in this case, does he say apparently, recalling something momentarily overlooked: "But I have quite forgotten one thing: the man has a wife too." And then he sets forth what this unknown wife would do if she were a sensible person. The plan is the old one of confronting the lovers, but it is new in the spirit with which the two approach it. Jura unfolds it to Marie before he mentions the fact that the man has a wife. He has led up to it by explaining how his wife fell in love with him, a penniless student teaching hotel guests winter sports. Delphina is so constituted that she feels that she can somehow get the beauty of life concentrated in one specimen. Knowing "Delly" as he does, and knowing the world too, he is not so much concerned over Delphina's going away from him

as over the fact that she is going to find her adventure simply a disillusioning episode instead of a supreme experience. It takes some little time to bring Marie to the "sensible" point of view that if Delphina Jura and this unnamed man love each other, the man's wife must follow the example of the woman's husband and willingly give up the man whose spirit is no longer hers. The argument that turns the balance is Jura's suggestion that the wife should be free to seek happiness too.

Marie's comment on this is: "That's the only way to get a real test of the man. For as long as the man has the feeling that his wife is sitting forsaken and mourning for him and waiting to see if he won't come back to her after all, that is such an agreeable feeling for a man that it proves nothing if at first he decides to choose the other one."

Hein, aged forty-three, and Delphina Jura, aged nineteen, arrive at the hunting cabin. The walk up from the end of the road has been a bit rough and by the time they have arrived Hein has, so to speak, lost consciousness of Delphina as an individual. She is only material for an experience, which he knows by heart and plays as he does his music, with his thoughts some place else. He says all the proper things; or at least he begins to say them all. Sometimes he breaks off and concludes "and so on; you understand." Just as the chipper Delphina is vainly endeavoring to coax the less limber Hein to take a long ramble in the forest, Jura and Marie arrive, and make their separate entrances. As Hein insists on telling Jura that Delphina is not with him, Jura goes to the door and calls, "Marie, dear, please come in."

MARIE (*outside, invisible*). Yes, Frank. (*She enters in tourist costume; nodding amiably to* HEIN.) Good evening, Gus.

HEIN (*coming to a stand before the table; taken aback.*) Marie! why, what——?

JURA. Please be seated, Marie. (*Offers her a chair.*)

DELPHINA (*from the left-hand door; furious, rushing at* JURA). What do you mean by calling this woman by her first name?

HEIN (*stamping his foot angrily; to* DELPHINA). What are you thinking of, how can you——?

DELPHINA (*almost crying with anger; to* HEIN). Let me be. I'm certainly not going to sit by and listen to my husband calling a strange woman—— (MARIE *has seated herself and looks at* DELPHINA *with a smile of quiet amusement.*)

JURA (*very quiet and very friendly toward all*). Right away, Delly. You shall know everything. But be seated. (*To* HEIN.) Excuse me if force of habit makes me continue to call my first wife Delly.

DELPHINA (*with a quick outcry*). Frank!

JURA. Right away, Delly. One thing at a time. But have a seat. (*As* DELPHINA *is about to sit down by* MARIE; *pointing to a chair on the opposite side of the table.*) No, you had better sit there, please. (*With a glance at the two ladies.*) One can never tell, and a large table between is certainly better. (*To* HEIN.) And won't you have a seat too?

HEIN (*declining curtly, ironically*). You are too kind. (*Steps behind* DELPHINA'S *chair, stands with arms crossed, and keeps looking at* MARIE; *curtly to* JURA.) Now will you tell us all what this means?

JURA. Right away. (*Sits down behind the table.*) It won't take long at all. All we want is to put things in order here.

HEIN (*suddenly angry*). Marie, that you——

MARIE. Please, listen to him first, Gus. He is right.

JURA. That's just it, he won't listen to me. It might have been all settled this long time.

HEIN (*bitter, urging*). Well?

JURA. May I first allow myself a few questions? And first of all I want to ask you, Delly; tell me——

DELPHINA (*with pinched voice*). What?

JURA. Tell me; do you love this man? (DELPHINA *quivers and bends her head.*)

HEIN (*piqued*). How do you come to——?

JURA. One may ask, I suppose? She can say so. It's no disgrace.

MARIE (*in a mild tone*). We just want to know.

HEIN (*piqued*). What is it to you, anyway?

MARIE (*half excusing*). Well, it is something to me after all.

JURA. One thing at a time, please. Speak, Delly; you do love this man? (DELPHINA *is silent.*)

JURA (*after a slight pause*). For I cannot imagine that you are spending your days with a man, or in the dwelling of a man, without——

HEIN (*interrupting, wishing to make some objection*). Sir, permit——

JURA (*with lively asseveration; naïvely*). But I *am* permitting.

HEIN (*vehemently*). What I mean is——

JURA. But let her answer, won't you?

HEIN (*to* DELPHINA, *imperiously, curtly*). Answer.

JURA. No, you mustn't intimidate her. Let her speak the truth quite frankly. Be perfectly easy. If perhaps the fact is that in the last analysis you don't love him at all but have simply been entertaining yourself with him——

HEIN (*furious*). Mr. Jura, now——

JURA (*interrupting, very decidedly*). Mr. Hein, now——

MARIE (*interrupting*). But people, now—now let her finally have her say.

JURA (*agreeing, quietly*). Yes.

HEIN (*piqued, urgently*). All right then.

JURA (*to* DELPHINA, *quietly*). So reflect and tell us. You need have no fear whatever. And I assure you in advance, we shall be content in any case.

DELPHINA (*starting up, angry*). Oh, you are content?

JURA (*wonderingly*). Well, why shouldn't I be?

DELPHINA (*vehemently*). You are content if I love another man? So long as I know that! Oh, if you are content!

JURA. But, child, whether I am or not, what shall I do about it? I can't change it any more than you, if you love him.

DELPHINA (*challengingly, defiantly*). I do love him. I love him.

HEIN (*corroboratingly*). She loves me. Of course.

JURA (*to* HEIN, *to show him that he has no need to get excited*). I have not doubted it in the least. (*Then, rising; looking at* HEIN.) And you?

HEIN. I? I also have not doubted it.

JURA. No, I know that, but whether you love her too?

HEIN (*vehemently*). That's no business of anybody in the world.

JURA (*quietly, but decidedly*). Excuse me, but it's very much the business of all three of us.

HEIN (*furious*). I can love whom I will. Nobody on earth has the power or the right to forbid me.

JURA. You can indeed. And in fact it pleases me very much that you——

HEIN (*more and more irritated*). Sir, whether I please you or not——

JURA (*interrupting*). It pleases me very much that you——

HEIN (*roaring*). I will not please you.

JURA (*also shouting*). But you do! You cannot forbid me.

MARIE (*conciliatingly*). After all, that doesn't matter so very much.

JURA (*already quieted*). No. You are right. And all I meant was that if you have the courage to follow your heart unconcernedly—then why won't you have the courage to confess it with the same unconcern?

HEIN (*piqued*). Courage, courage! Much courage about that. You doubt my courage?

JURA. Not at all. And it really wouldn't be at all kind of you to leave my wife in the lurch, now. So why not say you love her?

DELPHINA (*looks anxiously at* HEIN; *softly*). Gustav.

MARIE (*quietly*). Gustav, you really need not consider me. It's very dear of you but quite unnecessary, I assure you. And you're not usually like this.

HEIN (*more and more irritated*). What ails you all? You're fairly driving me to it.

JURA (*comfortably*). Then say it, so! Why will you still deny it?

HEIN (*furious*). I'm not denying anything. (*Roaring.*) Well, of course I love her.

JURA (*relieved*). Well, at last!

MARIE (*relieved*). Well, at last!

JURA. And now tell me one more thing, and then we'll be done in a jiffy. I'd just like to know how long you think, approximately, it is going to last.

HEIN (*shouting*). Sir, are you mad?

JURA (*with unshaken calm; to* DELPHINA). I suppose, in your case, I may assume that it is forever?

DELPHINA (*embittered, defiant*). Yes, you can.

JURA. And you, sir?

HEIN (*embittered*). Have you perhaps brought a notary along to take record of it?

JURA. Your word is sufficient.

HEIN. I am not accustomed to measure my feelings with a yardstick.

JURA. Yet you must have formed a certain opinion about it?

HEIN. No.

JURA. You love my wife. But you have loved others before her?

HEIN (*roaring*). Yes.

JURA. Then you should be able to figure up about how long it usually lasts with you.

HEIN (*roaring*). No.

JURA. That surprises me. With your experience I should be able to figure it.

HEIN (*shortly*). Not I. I love Delphina today. Whether I shall still love her tomorrow, I do not yet know.

JURA. But that will hardly satisfy her.

DELPHINA (*defiantly, proudly*). But it does satisfy me. For I know it.

JURA (*warningly, slowly, with admonishing finger*). Now, Delly, think well upon it.

DELPHINA (*sullenly*). I love him and shall always love him, and I ask nothing else. (*With a scornful outburst.*) You love Mrs. Marie too. So you must know how it is.

JURA. Just be patient. That will come later. One thing at a time. (*Rubbing his hands.*) So point number one is settled. You love my wife, and my wife loves you. And see now, how well this fits. For just imagine. I love your wife and your wife loves me. (*Shoves his crossed arms on the table and leans forward.*) How fortunate we four people are. So you see we can celebrate our marriage right now on this very day. (*Looks around the table with a laugh of pleasure.*)

HEIN (*suddenly very calm as he begins to suspect that all this is merely a prearranged game*). You have a sense of humor. For you surely cannot seriously imagine that an affair of such importance——

JURA (*breaking in*). Nothing is important but one's feeling.

HEIN (*quickly, impatiently*). But at least it needs to be thought over.

JURA. You should really have thought it over beforehand (*pointing his finger at* DELPHINA) beforehand! However, as you will. I am quite ready to discuss the matter with you again in the most thorough manner, tomorrow, or at any time. I have time, and can stay here as long as you like; please dispose of my time as you will. In the main, of course, we are already at one. And that makes me very glad. (*With a sudden idea as if recollecting, as he rises and goes to* MARIE.) Yes, and, and now only do I consider myself justified, my dear Marie, in giving you the first kiss. How much nicer it is when one can do it with a good conscience.

Now the agreement between Jura and Marie Hein was that this was a serious proposition; if Delphina and

Gustav were really in love, Frank Jura and Marie Hein would find what there was in companionship. Jura was convinced that he was not playing a game; not, as Marie phrased it, using her merely to frighten his wife or to alienate the man from her by jealousy.

Jura replied: "No, it must absolutely not be a game, if for no other reason than that if you try to make a game out of such a thing you never succeed, for in that case your play is bad from the very start." Now this proposition would fail to be convincing to any audience if Frank Jura were not so young and idealistic. As it is, the author convinces the reader of his sincerity. Marie's attitude is a bit more uncertain. Jura's seriousness gives the following scenes a quality of interest which would be lacking if he were pretending.

In his book *Play-Making,* William Archer discusses the relative merits of suspense and surprise in a drama, and is inclined to declare that suspense is the more desirable in creating interest. This play is an example of the use of suspense. There is scarcely an incident which surprises. The author tells all the secrets; that Hein is not going to a concert; that Mrs. Hein knows he is not; that the pupils know where he is going and with whom. All these are introductory material. The action begins when Jura calls to discuss the telegram. Here, too, the audience knows that both of these people know the main facts of the situation, though they do not admit the knowledge to each other. Jura is at pains to make clear very early that he has no idea of playing the conventional husband by rushing after the disturber of his marital bliss with a revolver. He tells what he is going to do, and how his plan will work: "Either the man will be overjoyed and embrace me, and leap for joy . . . or it may also be that the man will get a great fight."

So throughout the play one knows what is going to happen. What is not known is how the characters will behave in the event. This is only another way of stating that the interest of the play is in the character of the persons of the drama, rather than in the hackneyed plot.

The Revival of Romance in German Drama

In France, as has been noted, Naturalism in literature had its origin, but France produced no great dramas of naturalism. Strindberg in Sweden (1849–1912) is generally regarded as the greatest of the dramatists of Naturalism, with the exception of Hauptmann. In England this movement produced no drama, perhaps for the reason that the dramatic revival did not begin in England until the nineties and by 1892 Gerhardt Hauptmann had apparently forsaken the naturalism of *The Weavers* for the romanticism of *Hannele,* and by 1896 he had written his symbolic poetic drama *The Sunken Bell.* Ibsen was not performed in England until 1889, and Strindberg's work was not translated into English until 1912, though available in translation in 1890. *The Weavers* was never presented in English, so the playwrights working in that language had no visible and audible examples of the power of Naturalism as a dramatic method.

What this movement gave to dramatic construction is valuable. It developed the dialogue which gives the illusion of actual speech. It advanced the art of writing plays which produced the illusion of real life. The first contribution needs no explanation, though attention should be called to the fact that even Strindberg's dialogue is not that of actuality, but only the kind which produces the effect of reality. It is the second contribution which is fundamental. All drama which is great or even good produces in some degree the illusion of real life. The distinction of naturalistic drama is that it depends for the creation of this illusion almost entirely upon scenes which reveal character, motive, and psychological processes, and never bothers to put these scenes into a striking plot or incident. Coincidence, intrigue, letters delivered to the wrong address, lovers, uncles, or other lost relatives, who suddenly reappear, have no place in this style of play. Everything grows out of the working of natural laws,

particularly the laws of human conduct. Out of this modern drama has developed the play in which plot and character are inseparable. The student who is familiar with *Macbeth* will recall that it is a perfect example of the rhythm of character and incident, and may perhaps ask why this sort of drama is called modern. The answer is that it is only modern because it deals with modern material, from a modern standpoint. Shakespeare portrayed Macbeth as the great man who deliberately chose an evil course. The tragedy was that he became the victim of his own brutality and could only sustain himself by plunging deeper and deeper into sin. The modern playwright does not write of the crimes of kings, but of ordinary human beings, who are victims of their heredity, their environment, or of the social system. They do not fall "scornful before many spears," but "go meanly to perdition," speaking what sounds like (but is not) the language of everyday life, instead of such haunting lines as:

> Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow
> Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,
> To the last syllable of recorded time;
> And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
> The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!
> Life's but a walking shadow—, etc.

Naturalism has not demonstrated that the truth of life is *only* to be portrayed by staging realistic imitations of ordinary rooms in which ordinary people speak ordinary language, but that these can *also* produce something which lifts one out of the confusion of actuality into the quiet of reality.

Actuality is likely to be unsatisfactory because it challenges one to measure it by his own experience. In a modern performance of *Laugh Clown, Laugh,* the playbill called attention to the fact that the books in the library setting were actual volumes printed in Italian. The effect on the portion of the audience who gave any thought to the matter was "Well, are they the sort of books which that man would have?" The actuality of those volumes

interfered with the reality of their meaning in the play. For instead of entering into the hero's efforts to find forgetfulness in reading them, the spectator would be trying to make out the titles.

Reality, in the sense of artistic values, is the quality which inspires the reader or the spectator to create his own imaginative likeness of the author's work. Nothing can be real to man until he has some idea of it. Face to face with strange objects, man registers some impression of their actuality through his senses and his intellect. Their subsequent reality for him depends on how well his memory and imagination can recreate them. Every person beholds thousands of things which he straightway forgets; sometimes he even forgets that he has ever seen them. Thereafter, so far as he is concerned, these things might as well not exist. If they had engaged his imagination when he saw them they would still be living experiences in his memory. What he recalled might have little resemblance to the actual scene or object, but it would be real to him.

When one goes to the theater and sees a perfect representation of a street, or a room, or a forest, he may say: "Yes, that is a brick wall. I can see how the bricks are set in the mortar." But the chances are that he will forget all about that wall if it is merely a perfect imitation. It is to be hoped that he will, for the remembrance of bricks and mortar adds nothing to one's inner life. But if that wall suggests the pleasant seclusion of some golden afternoon in a garden, or some grim adventure in a city street, where brick walls denied him escape, or if the scene for which it makes the setting stirs up his imagination and opens his eyes to some phase of human experience, then the wall will have reality instead of mere actuality for him.

The neo-romantic drama and the drama of symbolism which made their appearance in the nineties were concrete expressions of the general principle that the function of art is to create *reality,* not *actuality.* One cannot be certain that he will catch life by faithfully reproducing its speech, its habitations, its actions. It is even possible that

in preoccupation with these, he may overlook entirely the elusive thing which makes them significant.

From the theatrical standpoint there is a practical consideration to be taken into account. The appeal of a good imitation of the actual is the appeal of novelty, and novelty is the thing which ages soonest. The surprise at beholding an apparently real brick wall is all there is to its theatrical value. There is nothing to think about afterwards. Romance and symbolism, on the contrary, are never new, and never old. They are a part of the dreams of mankind, and not being limited, they do not grow stale so easily.

The production of Ludwig Fulda's play *The Talisman* in 1892 set the commercial playwrights to composing romantic dramas. *The Talisman* was based on the story told by Andersen in *The Emperor's New Clothes.* The success of this departure from the actual into the realm of faery was so great that promptly all the places, historical and imaginary, became the scenes of new dramas.

Nor was the movement confined to Germany. Lewisohn says: "The new movement spread from country to country. Maeterlinck began to weave his unearthly dreams; Ibsen was confirmed in the tendency toward symbolism that germinates in the plays of his middle period; Strindberg turned to the mystic; Rostand gave new life to the romantic drama in verse. Various as these manifestations were, they sprang from a common weariness of the hardness of truth and the pitilessness of life." [1]

Of these stage successes, only a few seem likely to be remembered. It may be a little surprising that the outstanding figure of German Naturalism, Hauptmann, should have written the greatest of the symbolic plays. Next to him is Hugo von Hoffmanstahl (born 1874), who belongs, like Schnitzler, not to Germany, but to Austria.

Hauptmann's symbolic or romantic works include *Hannele, The Sunken Bell,* and *Henry of Aue.*

The first named was played in America in 1910 by Mrs. Fiske. Her own letter about the performance is as good

[1] Introduction to *The Dramatic Works of Hauptmann,* Vol. IV, vii. Huebsch, 1914.

a commentary upon the play as could be found, because it expresses an estimate of the work from the standpoint of a theatrical producer and a lover of drama, Mrs. Fiske happening to be both of these persons in one.

"As to *Hannele,* it was given for only a few performances in New York and Chicago, but that was all that was ever intended. It was purely a labor of love. We never dreamed of such an absurd project as playing a long season with anything so hazardous, so arduous and so fearfully expensive. It calls for a chorus of Heaven knows how many, and for a formidable orchestra, parts of the production which could not possibly be found outside of the biggest cities. . . . *Hannele* was just a little something on the side with which we were indulging its friends and ourselves.

"Its great beauty, which was only partly revealed at the Lyceum, and which, nevertheless, won great praise from high places, was completely manifest at the spacious Grand Opera House in Chicago, where we were able to secure parts of the fine Thomas orchestra for the lovely music. We gave three or four special matinées and it was superb. As a matter of fact, I think it about paid for itself; but even if it did not, the distinction it gave the entire engagement—the swell of the wake of it—was of incalculable value to us at the time and long afterward, lifting us all to a higher level. *Hannele* never made money, and was not expected to. I think it was probably one of the wisest enterprises Mr. Fiske and I ever undertook."[1] The regular play which *Hannele* interrupted with its special matinées was Ibsen's *Pillars of Society.*

In this drama Hauptmann does not entirely forsake his naturalistic methods, but side by side with scenes in the almshouse he places the visions of the dying child. These visions are eloquent of the life she has lived, both in the real world and the world of her imagination. The face of Christ is that of the schoolmaster, the only person she had loved, except her mother, whom she scarcely remembered. The robes of the blessed dead were to Hannele something like the bride's costume in tailors' shops and something like the fairy-tale garments of princesses, and

[1] *Mrs. Fiske:* Alexander Woolcott, The Century Co., 1917.

her assumption was the triumphal progress of the beggar-maid to the princess-throne from which wicked fairies had driven her. Hauptmann lived before psychology had made everyone familiar with the fact that dreams are embodiments of unfulfilled desires, but he knew all that any scientist could tell of a child's mind.

From Hannéle

ACT I

Scene. *A room in the almshouse of a village in the mountains. Bare walls. A door at the centre, back. To the left of this door is a small window. Before the window are a rickety table and bench. Near the table and to the left of it is a stove. To the right of the door is a pallet with a straw mattress and a few ragged coverlets. It is a stormy December evening. At the table seated and singing a hymn which she reads from the hymn book by the light of a tallow candle, sits* Tulpe, *an old, ragged pauper.*

Tulpe (*sings in a cracked, quavering voice*).

Jesus, lover of my so-oul,
Let me to thy bosom fly
While the waves of tr-ouble——

[*Enter* Hete, *a disreputable woman of about thirty with curly hair. Round her head is wrapped a thick cloth. She carries a bundle under her arm. Her dress is light and shabby.*

Hete (*blowing on her fingers*). Mercy on us, nice weather we're havin'! (*Drops her bundle on the table and goes on blowing her fingers, standing alternately on each of her feet which are shod in worn-out boots.*) We ain't had such weather for an age.

Tulpe. What have yer got in there?

Hete (*grinning and whining with pain, sits on the bench by the stove and tries to take off her boots*). Oh, Lord! My blessed toes are just burnin'.

Tulpe (*unties* Hete's *bundle in which are seen a loaf, a packet of chicory, a bag of coffee, a few pairs of stockings, etc.*). Ain't there nothin' for me in your bundle?

Hete (*at first too busy with her boots to mind* Tulpe. *Suddenly she snatches at the bundle and collects its contents*). Tulpe! (*One of* Hete's *feet is bare. She piles her belongings together and carries them off to the pallet.*) Now you'd best leave my things alone. D'you think I've been trampin' about freezin' all the bones in my body for *you*, eh?

Tulpe. Ah, yer needn't make such a fuss about it, you fool! (*Rises, closes the hymn book, and wipes it carefully with her skirt.*) I don't want none of the rubbish you've been beggin' for.

HETE (*hiding her property under the mattress*). Beggin'? I'd like to know who's done the most beggin'—you or me! You've done nothin' else all your life. And you're no chicken either.

TULPE. Don't you fly out about it! We know the sort of life *you've* led. Pastor told you what he thought about *you*, he did. I didn't tramp about the streets when *I* was a girl. *I* was respectable.

HETE. I s'pose that's why you were sent to jail!

TULPE. You'll get there fast enough, don't you fear, my beauty. Just you let me get sight of a gendarme, that's all. I could tell him a thing or two about you, 's sure's yer alive.

HETE. Oh, shut up! I don't care for your gendarmes. Let 'em come and see if I don't tell 'em somethin' as'll make you feel uncomfortable.

TULPE. Yer can't say nothin' against me.

HETE. Oh, I can't, can't I? Who stole the overcoat from the innkeeper's little boy, eh? (TULPE *makes as though to spit at* HETE.) That's what you call manners, I s'pose? Yer shan't have nothin' now, just to spite yer.

TULPE. Ah, go on! I wouldn't take anythin' from the likes er you, anyhow.

HETE. No, and you won't get nothin'.

[PLESCHKE *and* HANKE *appear outside the open door, against which they have literally been blown by the howling wind.* PLESCHKE, *a scrofulous, childish old man, bursts out laughing.* HANKE, *a good-for-nothing blackguard, blasphemes. They are seen to shake the snow off their hats and cloaks. Each carries a bundle.*

The sordid scene continues in the same vein, the newcomers adding to its sordidness. It is broken in upon by Schoolmaster Gottwald, who enters carrying the limp, and rag-clad form of fourteen-year-old Hanńele Mattern, and followed by Seidl, a woodcutter. The child, desperate from poverty and the abuse of her drunken stepfather, has attempted to drown herself. When the doctor arrives and examines the poor frail body which is a mass of bruises, Hanńele begs her beloved teacher not to let the doctor make her well, but to let her "go to mother." Sister Martha comes to nurse the dying child and to her Hanńele confides her visions—first the terrifying one of her drunken father. The kind sister thinks it is Pleschke's coat and

hat which have produced the illusion and she carries them out of the room. The stage direction at this point is:

[*It is almost dark in the room. As soon as the* SISTER *is gone the figure of* MATTERN, *the mason, appears at the foot of the bed. He has a drunken and unkempt look, tangled red hair, and a shabby old soldier's cap. Round his right wrist is a cord. He stares threateningly at* HANŃELE, *as if about to strike. A pale light envelops the apparition and streams onto the bed.* HANŃELE *covers her face with her hands in terror. She writhes and moans piteously.*

THE APPARITION (*in a hoarse and exasperated voice*). Where are you? Loafin' agen, as usual, eh? I'll teach yer to skulk, you little devil you. So you've been tellin' tales, have you? Tellin' folks I ill-uses you, eh? I beats you, eh? Aren't you ashamed to tell such lies? You ain't no child of mine. Get up, you lazy baggage. I don't want to have nothin' more to do with you. I've half a mind to throw you out into the gutter. Get up and light the fire, d'ye hear? If I keeps you it's out o' charity. Now, then, up with you! You won't, won't you? Well, then, look out—— (HANŃELE *rises with an effort. Her eyes remain closed. She drags herself to the stove and falls senseless as* SISTER MARTHA *returns.* THE APPARITION *vanishes.*)

The gentle sister comforts Hanńele and finally sings her to sleep with the familiar lullaby:

Sleep, darling, sleep,
In the garden goes a sheep.
A little lamb with thee shall play,
From dawn to sunset all the day.

[*Twilight fills the room.* SISTER MARTHA *has gone. The pale and ghostly form of a woman appears and seats itself on the side of the bed. She is slightly bent and seems to rest on her thin bare arms. Her feet are bare. Her long white locks stream over her shoulders and upon the bed. Her face seems worn and wasted. Her sunken eyes, though closed, seem fixed on* HANŃELE. *Her voice sounds as the voice of one speaking in her sleep. Before she speaks, her lips are seen to move, as though it cost her a great effort to get the words out. She is prematurely aged. Her cheeks are hollow and she is clad in miserable clothes.*

APPARITION. Hanńele!

HANNELE *(eyes closed)*. Mother, dearest mother! Is it you?

APPARITION. It is I. I have washed the feet of my Saviour with my tears, and I have dried them with my hair.

HANNELE. Do you bring me good tidings?

APPARITION. Yes!

HANNELE. Have you come far?

APPARITION. Hundreds of thousands of miles through the night.

HANNELE. How strange you look, mother!

APPARITION. As the children of earth look, so I look.

HANNELE. There are buttercups and daisies on your lips. Your voice rings out like music.

APPARITION. That is no true ring, my child.

HANNELE. Mother, dear mother, your beauty dazzles me.

APPARITION. The angels in heaven are a thousandfold more radiant.

HANNELE. Why are you not like them?

APPARITION. I suffered for your sake.

HANNELE. Mother mine, won't you stay with me?

APPARITION *(rising)*. I cannot stay!

HANNELE. Is it beautiful where you come from?

APPARITION. There the wide meadows are sheltered from wind and storm and hail. God shields them.

HANNELE. Can you rest there when you are tired?

APPARITION. Yes!

HANNELE. Can you get food to eat there when you are hungry?

APPARITION. There is meat and fruit for all who hunger and golden wine for those who thirst. *(She shrinks away.)*

HANNELE. Are you going, mother?

APPARITION. God calls me!

HANNELE. Does he call loudly?

APPARITION. He calls *me* loudly.

HANNELE. My heart is parched within me, mother.

APPARITION. God will cool it with roses and lilies.

HANNELE. Mother, will God redeem me?

APPARITION. Do you know this flower I hold in my hand?

HANNELE. It's golden Himmelschlüssel.*

APPARITION *(puts it into* HANNELE'S *hand)*. Take it and keep it as God's pledge. Farewell.

HANNELE. Mother! mother, don't leave me!

APPARITION *(shrinks away)*. A little while and ye shall not see me, and again a little while and ye shall see me.

*The German name means "key of heaven"; the cowslip. "Sesame" has been suggested as the equivalent in significance.

HANŃELE. I'm afraid!

APPARITION (*shrinking still farther away*). Even as the snow-drifts on the hills are swept away by the winds, so shall thy troubles be lifted from thee.

HANŃELE. Don't go!

APPARITION. The Children of Heaven are as lightnings in the night. Sleep!

[*The room gradually grows dark. Pretty voices of young children are heard singing the second stanza of "Sleep, Darling, Sleep."*

Sleep, darling, sleep!
Bright guests their vigils keep—

[*A gold-green light suddenly floods the room. Three radiant* ANGELS *crowned with roses and having the form of beautiful winged youths appear and take up the song. In their hands they hold music. The* FEMALE APPARITION *has vanished.*

The guests who guard thee through the night
Are angels from the realms of light.
Sleep, darling, sleep!

HANŃELE (*opens her eyes and gazes rapturously at the* ANGELS). Angels! (*Her joy and her amazement grow, but she seems still in doubt.*) Angels!! (*Triumphantly.*) Angels!!!

[*Short pause. Then the* ANGELS *sing the following strophes from the music in their hands.*

FIRST ANGEL. The sunlight that gleamed on the mountains
Gave nothing to thee of its gold,
The wavering green of the valleys
For thee ne'er its wealth would enfold.

SECOND ANGEL. The life-giving grain, as it ripened
Thy craving for bread did not heed,
The kine as they grazed in the meadows
Denied thee their milk in thy need.

THIRD ANGEL. The buds and the blossoms around thee
Whose sweetness delighted the day,
Their glory of azure and purple
Ne'er shed on the shards of thy way.

[*Brief pause.*

FIRST ANGEL. A heavenly greeting we bring thee
From out of the darkness of space,
And the tips of our radiant pinions
Are touched with God's grace.

SECOND ANGEL. In the hem of our raiment we bear thee
The fragrance and joy of the spring,
The rose of the morn, newly born,
On our lips we bring.
THIRD ANGEL. The mystic, green glow o'er our home-land
Illumines our feet in the skies,
The spires of the City Eternal
Shine deep in our eyes.

Such is Hanńele's fever dream of her call to the last journey. Her death and funeral are equally lovely and touching, combining as they do the child's fairy world with what she has been taught of heaven. And into this raptured vision the almshouse enters briefly; enters and disappears in the radiance of the heavenly light. The wretched inmates speak briefly in their own accents, and then their voices utter strange and beautiful things about the transfigured Hanńele as she lies in her crystal coffin, dressed in silk, and shod with crystal. Naturalism combines with dreams made flesh to produce something which, in the words of Mrs. Fiske, has a great and measurable dramatic value.

PLAYMAKING AND LITERATURE

AS has been pointed out, the dramatic and the theatrical qualities of plays are quite different.[1] And it might be added that frequently literary merit is distinct from either. Molière is said to have no style; yet he is one of the greatest dramatists the world has produced. Oscar Wilde's style is perfect, of its sort, but he is not even a second-rate dramatist. Not only would no one dream of putting him beside Sophocles, Shakespeare and Molière, but he cannot compete even with Ben Jonson, Rostand and Hauptmann; indeed he would hardly qualify for the class which includes Shaw, Sudermann and Hervieu.

One reason why spoken drama is not more popular in America is that so few of the people who make up the audiences have any standards of what a good performance should be. It is not so with music. In almost any fair-sized town, there is a group who understand what constitutes good orchestra performance, good chamber music, good solo playing or singing. Even the art of painting is more generally understood than that of the theater. This is partly because the people who send out exhibitions of painting try to make those works of art understandable. Of course neither concerts nor art exhibits have been so thoroughly commercialized as the theater, and so there is greater opportunity for actual criticism of music and painting than of drama, using that term in the sense of an examination into the aims and achievements of the creator of the work, and a consideration of whether what has been achieved is consistent with the general requirements of art.

Clayton Hamilton says that in America we have no dramatic criticism, but only theatrical reviewing, which is something very different. The newspaper reporter is primarily interested in the theatrical merits of a play—which is proper enough, if the readers understand the limitations of that sort of reporting. On the other hand not a few

of our teachers of drama are interested solely in the literary aspect of the play, and estimate works from this standpoint alone. The result is likely to be that when the average person interested in being entertained by a good play follows the advice of the theatrical reporter he sees a play like *Broadway,* or *Strange Interlude,* or *The Road to Rome,* and feels that he has not been either greatly entertained or educated in the art of drama. If he takes the advice of the professor, he may attend a revival of—let us say *Cyrano de Bergerac,* or a Theatre Guild presentation of some clever trifle like *The Guardsman.* If he enjoys *Cyrano,* he may come to the conclusion that all the great playwrights are dead. If he does not get the enjoyment from it which its reputation promised, he may decide that these older authors are overestimated. The Theatre Guild performance will certainly be practically faultless as a performance. But the pleasure the average person derives from such a work depends upon ability to judge of good acting, and to appreciate the subtle irony of the dramatic conflict. There are as many chances that the average person will fail to get his money's worth from the professor's selection as from the reporter's.

The way to make sure that one does get something from any theatrical entertainment, from the best to the poorest, is to be prepared to appreciate what may be offered; to have some definite ideas of what is "good theater," what constitutes an "effective curtain," a "big scene," a "fat part," and a good "character bit." These are what one may expect from the commercial play which is praised by the theatrical reviewers. On the dramatic side one needs to be able to appreciate the theme of the play, how well the story suits the theme; how convincingly it is told—that is, how well the incidents are connected and how much the action of each person in the drama grows out of his character.

The theatrical and the dramatic are not necessarily incompatible. Shakespeare was at once a supreme master of theatrical effect and of dramatic power. He had grown up in the theater and understood all that could be done in an Elizabethan one. He also had a unique understanding

of the human heart with an equally unique power to utter the language of that heart in matchless lines.

Ibsen was also a master of theatrical effect and of dramatic understanding. Molière not only wrote and directed his own plays, but acted in them almost to the day of his death. Sophocles was an actor before he was a dramatist, and of course he directed his own plays. All of these notable dramatists wrote "good theatre." They wrote great plays because they knew how to preserve the perfect rhythm of character and incident. Sophocles and Shakespeare were supreme poets too. It is said that Sophocles' Greek is the most beautiful ever written, and it is superfluous to comment on the magic of Shakespeare's language. Both of these playwrights wrote in poetry because that was the conventional language of the stage in their respective eras. Molière wrote in prose, as did Ibsen. The two former playwrights made no particular effort to *imitate* life, though in the works of both may be found some of the most "natural" passages of dialogue. Yet the most unliterary reader recognizes their plays as "true to life." Molière and Ibsen, in different degrees and different fashions because of the different theaters in which they worked, produced a drama which is called the drama of imitation. They did not imitate life in the sense which the disciples of Naturalism did. They practiced selection and compression, but the effect was of faithful representation of the surfaces of life. Neither the theatrical nor the dramatic requires any one method, any one style of writing.

Yet although certain effects are constant in their theatrical value, it would be a mistake to expect exactly the same sort of pleasure from a poetic drama as from a modern prose play. One reads poetry primarily to enter into the *mood* the poet is communicating. Even when he is giving information the poet is generally conveying also his feeling about the idea, as well as the idea itself. Prose is concerned primarily with conveying thought. Of course the more it is touched with emotion and imagination, the more impressive that thought will be. Dramatists of genius manage to make their characters reveal themselves in ordinary conversation. For example, there is hardly

a line which Hjalmar Ekdal speaks which does not throw light on his vanity, his cowardice, his posing. Every other character in this play is equally consistent, though naturally not all of them are so completely pictured. Ibsen knew how to write the kind of dramatic dialogue which Galsworthy compares to good lace. The threads which compose it go to make up the pattern of the drama. Wilde's dialogue has these pattern threads too, of course. But in addition it is overlaid with ornamental epigrams which have no place in the pattern and distract attention from it by their very brilliance.

The student of drama may recall Jacques' discourses in *As You Like It.* The famous passage beginning: "All the world's a stage," neither reveals character nor advances the action. It does serve to fill in the interval while Orlando is fetching Adam to the Duke's quarters. The scene earlier in the same act, which begins with Amiens' song "Under the Greenwood Tree," has nothing at all to do with the action. It could be taken out bodily; but no one would be willing to spare it. It may be asked why the critic counts against Wilde the same sort of devices for which Shakespeare is praised. The answer is that Shakespeare was working in what we may call the drama of rhetoric, on a stage which made no pretense to producing any illusion of reality. Drama had not yet cast off the features of the pageant and ritual, from which it had grown up. Wilde wrote for the stage which aimed at presenting the drama of imitation.

If one reads Wilde as he does Congreve, simply for the pleasure of the dialogue, and not for any comment on life, the reader will find abundantly what he seeks. But in the new drama—the drama of realism—Wilde has no place. The mood in which one should approach *As You Like It* is that of happy surrender to the magic of the woods: a willingness to "fleet the time carelessly as they did in the golden world" as one of the characters puts it. The mood for Wilde's plays is one of willingness to listen to clever people speak polished phrases which are made chiefly for their cleverness, and only at the rarest intervals to express genuine feeling.

As a starting point it may be assumed that the "theatrical" is that which produces a response in one's nerves and senses; something which touches the areas of consciousness which act independently of *reasoned* convictions. The dramatic is that which appeals to those emotions and convictions which are not altered by nervous strain or circumstantial environment. For example, everybody is interested in the poor at Christmas time, and our newspapers abound in theatrical stories of children who need clothes or want dolls. The lives of these people are frequently tragic dramas, heart-rending struggles against unconquerable odds. But what the public is interested in is not this deep-lying drama, which goes on three hundred and sixty-five days in the year, but the theatrical stories of the momentary cheer brought by a good dinner or a new doll. There is no reason why the theatrical and the dramatic should not be one, but they are not always so, either on the stage or the theater of life. The Christmas dinner unexpectedly supplied to the hungry family does not always mark the turn of fortune for that family; and on the stage one sees "big scenes" which could really have just as little permanent effect on the acted story, if its author had written it true to life. As we demand of art that it avoid the mistakes of life, it is fair that the playwright be asked to make his theatrical scenes dramatic.

It is the business of the theater to be theatrical, just as it is the business of literature to be literary, and of music to be musical. A play which isn't theatrical may be well enough to read, but it cannot properly be called a play. It may be a dramatic poem, or perhaps a dramatic argument—like Browning's *A Blot on the Scutcheon,* or Shaw's *Getting Married.* The critics may call it "closet drama," which is just another way of saying "a play which cannot be played," but that hardly changes its nature. If a man should try to write a concerto for the piano without the least knowledge of that instrument, or if he attempted to compose a symphony for an orchestra without any definite idea of what the various instruments can be made to express, he would be considered a little rash, not to say

mad. But when people quite unacquainted with the theater as an instrument, write literature in dialogue form which is not suited to get any great effects from the theater, the critics declare that the public is not interested in fine drama, and that the theatrical reviewers in the newspapers are bent on keeping literature off the stage.

"Theater," as has been stated, means a place to see, and "drama" is something done. The theatrical is something which can be readily seen, either with the bodily eye or that of the mind. If it takes deep study or the sort of thought one gives to the solution of a problem in calculus to discover what the stage characters are doing and how they feel, whatever other merits that composition may have it is untheatrical.

It is necessary to a story that something happen. Dialogue is one of the chief elements of plays, but it is only one element. A French critic divided the text of a play into three categories; the speech of character, the speech of situation and the speech of the author. (*Mot de caractère; mot de situation; mot d'auteur.*) The first and second, the speeches which reveal character and advance the story, are all which modern playcraft permits the author to employ. The third is the kind of speech in which the author simply sets forth his own views. The mark of such a speech is that it can be taken bodily out of the play without changing either the picture of the character or the development of the story. Mr. Shaw in his later plays fills pages with these "speeches of the author." For example there is that long and tiresome harangue on enunciation in *Pygmalion,* otherwise mainly a clever and interesting stage performance. The chief objection to this passage is that it is untheatrical. Nobody has come to the theater to be lectured on better speech. It is not a subject which one "sees" readily. For a theatrical example of a *mot d'auteur,* one may turn to *London Assurance* and reread that description of a gentleman. It could be cut down to the first sentence, and the play would lose nothing. Its sentiments have nothing to do with the character of Sir Harcourt as we have seen him, but those sentiments are dear and familiar to the audience. So while the speech-

enthusiast in *Pygmalion* talks in character and the nobleman in *London Assurance* utters sentiments which one scarcely can believe he had ever felt, the nobleman's speech will "go over" better in the theater.

In general the theatrical has emotional appeal. It almost invariably has sentimental appeal. The old-fashioned melodrama pictured the disinherited heroine standing outside the door of the old homestead in the falling snow, preferably on Christmas eve. Now homelessness is not logically more sad when the snow is falling than any other time, but it seems sadder because it is sharply contrasted in the minds of the onlookers with the joy and coziness associated with the home fireside on winter evenings. Christmas being the symbol of peace, goodwill, and loving remembrance, is a most striking background for loneliness, poverty and estrangement. Nowadays if the playwright should present the prodigal daughter outside the glass door in the snowstorm, the sophisticated playgoer and reviewers would jeer loudly. But that would be only because the author had not taken the trouble to vary the scene a bit, and not because it isn't "good theatre." Galsworthy brought his three disinherited folk into Wellwyn's studio as the Christmas chimes were ringing, and no one accused him of poor workmanship. Shakespeare gave us Lear, "every inch a king," sustained by a grandeur which rose above the might of the thunderstorm. Maeterlinck's characters, lost in spiritual mazes, wander through dim mysterious corridors, which seem to have neither end nor beginning. All of these expedients are "theatrical," but because they are inseparably woven into the substance of the dramatic conflict, they are dramatic, too.

The theatrical tricks—if one wishes so to name them—are contrast, coincidence, suspense, conflict, surprise, and reversal of fortune or circumstance. Dramatic factors are these very same elements. The difference is in the fashion in which they are brought into the story. "Good theatre" provokes emotionalized sensation; surprise, which is pleased or pained; suspense which keeps one anxious or amused; partizanship for one character or another; pleasure or regret at the outcome.

Take Shaw's *Pygmalion* for example. This story of the passing off of an ignorant flower girl for a duchess by the simple process of teaching her to talk and dressing her up has two questions involved in it, the answers to which will keep the audience interested: the first is, Will Eliza be able to carry off the part of the duchess? The second is, What will happen to her afterward? There is opportunity for creating considerable suspense when Eliza is introduced into a fashionable drawing-room in her assumed character of a lady of fashion. The scene is one of the most delightful in the play. When Eliza's tutor persuades his snobbish aunt that the girl's slum gossip is "the new small talk," Shaw gives us a satire of the would-be fashionable, and the anxiety of Higgins lest Eliza should make some slip which could not be passed off, is communicated to the audience, thus fulfilling the prime requirement of drama.

The average playgoer would, of course, prefer to see Eliza's triumph at the big party. It would have been amusing to see how far she had advanced from the time of her call on Higgins' aunt. But after all, that call had made it clear that she would be able to play the part, with a little more coaching. So really the thing the audience wants to see is the result of the change in her. After the report of her triumph at the ball, one wants to know what next. Does the dramatist answer? Not at all. He simply has Eliza ask that question of her instructors. The conclusion is that she has been made unfit for her former life without being prepared for anything else. The play ends with something to think about, and that is a bad *theatrical* ending. And while "good theatre" is not always good drama, poor theater is generally poor drama too. One can feel no particular joy or regret at the way this play ends. It may propose stimulating subject for thought—but the object of drama is to arouse emotion.

The "big scene" as the theatrical term is, or the "obligatory scene" of dramatic terminology, is the scene which, for one reason or another, a play must have to be logical or complete.

In *The Wild Duck,* Hjalmar is bound to discover the truth of Werle's relation to his career. Ibsen does not

present that scene, but only the change in Hjalmar after he returns from his walk with Gregers. In *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray,* Paula's past must come to grips with her new life. How this is to be done is a question which keeps the audience in suspense. Pinero chose a purely theatrical method of precipitating that obligatory scene. He brought into the story an old lover of Paula's, and made him a suitor of Paula's stepdaughter. It is good theater, but bad drama. It registers with the audience, but it strains credulity. One has no feeling that it was inevitable, or even highly probable that Ardale should appear. Rather he seems to have been dragged in by the dramatist. He really brings no new idea into the play. Aubrey was aware before he married Paula that she had had lovers, and certainly Paula knew it. Just why the appearance of one of them, even if he were in love with her stepdaughter, should be fatal is hard to grasp. If the past was over and done with for Paula, certainly it could be for Hugh Ardale, and the thing to do was to let it stay buried. The dramatic scene would have been one in which Paula's own instability and lack of purpose and patience brought matters to a climax.

In *Cyrano de Bergerac,* the scene the audience feels must take place is one in which Roxane discovers *whose* soul she had loved. The dramatist, with admirable skill, postpones that discovery to the very end of the play. Time after time it seems inevitable. Christian's honesty and soldierly qualities demand that he tell the truth himself, as soon as he knows it, and so we have the "big scene" in act four where Roxane makes it clear that she cannot be held except by greatness of mind, and Christian insists that Cyrano shall claim what really belongs to the beautiful soul instead of the handsome face. But Cyrano loves Roxane too much to deprive her of even a dead ideal. This whole play abounds in "good theatre," which is also good drama.

Among the theatrical devices which are frowned upon by modern criticism are mistaken identity, forged documents, lost letters or undelivered messages, villains who are wicked from pure delight in wickedness, sudden reforma-

tions, poor boys who become famous, dilemmas which are solved by explosions, wrecks, or tornadoes. The average reader being told that all of these are stale and discredited in drama is likely to get the impression that the only good plays are those in which nothing happens. A little study of good plays will show that even on the modern stage, practically all of these devices are capable of being woven into as good drama as the most modern person can write.

The scene in which Cyrano impersonates Christian, is certainly dramatic, and just as certainly a case of mistaken identity. If it be objected that this refers to the use of disguise, one may call attention to *The Guardsman,* esteemed one of the Theatre Guild's most brilliant offerings. The story is that an actor wishing at once to test his wife's fidelity and his own powers of impersonation made love to her disguised as an officer of the guard. The irony of the play was that his wife insisted that she recognized him, and thus cast a slight upon his talent as an actor. That the work is a subtle study does not change the fact that it is a disguise play.

As for *Broadway,* that transcript from the newspapers which so engaged the critics, it certainly had both a villain and a false telephone message—Which is a pretty good modern substitute for the forged document. Besides its smoothly knit theatrical structure, its chief merit was the characterization of the "hoofer," and in the last analysis he was nothing but the decent, though conceited young ignoramus from New York, who has replaced the conceited young man from the country of older plays. He wins the girl against odds, just as the country bumpkin of old times did. And the girl refuses to be beguiled by the gentleman who wants to help her along—for the usual price —in the usual way. The melodramatic fashion in which the bootlegger's widow avenged her husband's death was as sensational as anything the old ten, twenty, and thirty-cent shows could offer. These comments do not prove that *Broadway* did not deserve the praise which the theatrical reviewers gave it. They only prove that there is nothing modern in the way of theatrical effects. *Broadway* was a dramatization of actuality, done with skill; a "good show"

by all the laws of showcraft. It might be compared to some of Ben Jonson's comedies based on features of the Elizabethan social fabric. These are all old-fashioned now because about the only thing in them which mattered was the satire of a society which has been so completely forgotten that the satire is without point. *Broadway* too is about nothing of permanent importance, but only some of the more flashy features of the era of bootlegging and "rackets."

It would be quite easy to take up these discredited "theatre" features one by one, and show how they have been used by the most praised of moderns. Falder in *Justice* secures employment by a forged reference, and he gets into prison by raising a check. Did not Cyrano forge letters from Christian to Roxane? In Pinero's play *Iris,* there is first the stock theatrical device of the will which forbids Iris to remarry, and then the stock villain in Maldonado. Admittedly, Pinero is more of a theater technician than a dramatist, but *Iris* is one of his mature plays and one the critics, literary and theatrical, unite to praise.

Ibsen, model of the realists, gives us a sudden reformation in *Pillars of Society.* Bernick is apparently transformed by his anxiety over his son, and his relief in discovering that the boy had not sailed with the doomed ship. Even Eugene O'Neill, esteemed our most relentless realist, reformed Anna Christie by the power of the sea. It would be easy to go on indefinitely, but it is enough to recognize that it is the treatment of material which makes it dramatic or only theatrical and not the material itself. The essence of drama is the creation of character which reveals its quality in action. The most theatrical incident may be a perfectly natural—even an inevitable happening. If the playwright can make it so, he is a dramatist. When he cannot—if he is theatrical he will at least entertain those who have parted with money in the hope of buying amusement.

For example, it is the most conventional of theatrical devices to have some minor characters give the audience information about the hero or the heroine, or state the situation. The skill of the dramatist is evidenced by the

degree in which he makes this introduction a part of the action, rather than a detached prologue. His introduction should prepare for what is to follow, but not sufficiently to detract from interest. If Cyrano, with his monstrous nose, should appear on the stage without any previous announcement, the audience would quite overlook his character in surprise at his appearance. Ragueneau and Le Bret prepare their friends—and incidentally the audience too, both for the way Cyrano looks and the way he acts. The audience is pricked to anticipation, and so when Cyrano does appear they will be eager to see what he will do, and not merely absorbed in gaping at his nose.

In general, anticipation is more dramatic than surprise, for the simple reason that it gives the audience more opportunity to respond emotionally to the course of events upon the stage. But one rule of the technique of playmaking is that there are no absolute rules, so it must not be assumed that suspense is dramatic and surprise is undramatic. In nothing did Shakespeare show his technical skill more than in his ability to give a novel turn to a situation which seemed to offer no chance for anything but an obvious outcome. There is the last speech of Othello, for example. He is being taken away as a prisoner, after it has been made clear that in killing Desdemona he had not been punishing a guilty wife, but only murdering an innocent woman. Iago has been delivered to the torturers, and Othello is to wait until he is called to trial. In a modern theater, the audience would be reaching for their hats, but Othello stops his guards—and the audience; telling those guards what plea they shall enter for him.

> Soft you! a word before you go.
> I have done the state some service, and they know't.
> No more of that. I pray you in your letters,
> When you shall these unlucky deeds relate,
> Speak of me as I am; nothing extenuate,
> Nor aught set down in malice: then must you speak
> Of one that loved not wisely, but too well;
> Of one not easily jealous but, being wrought,
> Perplexed in the extreme; of one whose hand,
> Like the base Indian, threw a pearl away

Richer than all his tribe; of one whose subdued eyes,
Albeit unused to the melting mood,
Drop tears as fast as the Arabian trees
Their medicinal gum. Set you down this:
And say besides, that in Aleppo once
Where a malignant and a turban'd Turk
Beat a Venetian and traduced the state,
I took by the throat the circumcised dog
And smote him, thus. (*Stabs himself.*)

Here is a highly theatrical ending, but will anyone claim that it is not excellent drama? Its theatricality lies in its unexpectedness, in its violence. The speech begins like a prisoner's plea for justice. He will not, being a great soldier, remind the state of his services, but only ask them to consider the circumstances that led to his crime and his remorse. Then having fixed the attention of his hearers upon the trial—which he knows will never be held—he carries them along with his tale of stabbing the Turk—as he stabs himself. His action is at once completely unexpected and completely in character. Cassio's remark: "This did I fear—for he was great of heart" is the comment each spectator would have made.

A theatrical ending which is purely theatrical and quite without dramatic quality is that of Jones' *Michael and His Lost Angel.* Audrie, dying, seeks Michael in the monastery to which he has retreated to find peace. There seems to be no particular reason for her death except that it makes a good scene. She dies in the cynical adventuress mood in which she made her first appearance in Michael's study. But one feels like quoting that famous remark of the dramatic critic, who when asked concerning the heroine, "But what did she die of?" replied: "Why, of the fifth act." A death-scene is a sure-fire emotional appeal, so the dramatist has Audrie expire, and Michael speak thus to Father Hilary:

"Take me! I give my life, my will, my soul to you. Do what you please with me! I'll believe all, do all, suffer all —only—only—persuade me that I shall meet her again."

That is a good piece of theatricality. It fails of being drama because Michael has never shown any character of

a great lover, and Audrie has seemed to be posing most of the time.

Galsworthy's work contains far more valuable observation of life, and far more sincerity than Pinero's. But the difference between a man of letters and a man of the theater may be seen from comparing the fashion in which the two men handle the same situation. In *Justice,* Falder raised his employer's check from nine to ninety pounds because Ruth Honeywell, the woman he loved, was in want. When he has served his term, and been able to persuade his old employers to give him another chance, even though he confesses that he has forged a recommendation, it is the thought of Ruth that holds him from utter despair. But Ruth has been living with her employer, and Falder's old firm, who at first planned to help her get a divorce from the drunken brute who abused and then deserted her, feel that this cannot be done. They insist that she tell Falder. Here is a dramatic scene—but Galsworthy does not present it. He sends Ruth and Falder into another room, and leaves the stage to the detective-sergeant who has come to arrest Falder for breaking his parole—and forging the recommendation. In place of Ruth's explanation of why the Hows have changed their mind about getting her a divorce, this is what is said:

WISTER. Sorry to disturb you, sir. A clerk you had two years ago. I arrested him in this room.

JAMES. What about him?

WISTER. I thought perhaps I might get his whereabouts from you. (*There is an awkward silence.*)

COKESON (*pleasantly, coming to the rescue*). We're not responsible for his movements; you know that.

JAMES. What do you want with him?

WISTER. He's failed to report himself this last four weeks.

WALTER. How d'you mean?

WISTER. Ticket of leave won't be up for another six months, sir.

WALTER. Has he to keep in touch with the police till then?

WISTER. We're bound to know where he sleeps every night. I dare say we shouldn't interfere, sir, even though he hasn't reported himself. But we've just heard there's a serious matter of

obtaining employment with a forged reference. With the two things together—we must have him.

[*Again there is silence.* WALTER *and* COKESON *steal glances at* JAMES, *who stands staring steadily at the detective.*

COKESON (*expansively*). We're very busy at the moment. If you could make it convenient to call again, we might be able to tell you.

JAMES (*decisively*). I'm a servant of the law, but I dislike peaching. In fact, I can't do such a thing. If you want him you must find him without us.

[*As he speaks his eye falls upon* FALDER'S *cap still lying on the table and his face contracts.*

WISTER (*noting the gesture—quietly*). Very good, sir. I ought to warn you that, having broken the terms of his license, he's still a convict, and sheltering a convict——

JAMES. I shelter no one. But you mustn't come here and ask questions which it's not my business to answer.

WISTER (*dryly*). I won't trouble you further, then, gentlemen.

COKESON. I'm sorry we couldn't give you the information. You quite understand, don't you? Good morning!

[WISTER *turns to go, but instead of going to the door of the outer office he goes to the door of the clerk's room, where* FALDER *and* RUTH *are.*

COKESON. The other door . . . the other door!

[WISTER *opens the clerks' door.* RUTH'S *voice is heard: "Oh do!" and* FALDER'S *"I can't!" There is a little pause; then with sharp fright* RUTH *says: "Who's that?"* WISTER *has gone. The three men look aghast at the door.*

WISTER (*from within*). Keep back, please! (*He comes swiftly out with his arm twisted in* FALDER'S. *The latter gives a white, staring look at the three men.*)

WALTER. Let him go this time, for God's sake!

WISTER. I couldn't take the responsibility, sir.

FALDER (*with a queer desperate laugh*). Good!

[*Flinging a look at* RUTH, *he throws up his head and goes out through the outer office, half-dragging* WISTER *after him.*

WALTER (*with despair*). That finishes him. It'll go on forever now.

[*There are sounds of footsteps descending the stone stairs; suddenly a dull thud, a faint "My God" in* WISTER'S *voice.*

Falder's body is borne into the room. He has jumped and broken his neck.

Now if Pinero had been writing this play he would probably have given the scene with Falder and Ruth instead of the rather inconsequential passage between the officer of the law and the kindly employers who desired to shield Falder. This scene is not without dramatic power. It has the quality of suspense. Perhaps, since it is the workings of the law which Galsworthy is dramatizing, it is more consistent to keep the Law's impersonal but terrible hounding before the audience than to break the theme by Ruth's confession. Still it was the refusal of the How Brothers to "swindle the law" which necessitated Ruth's confession. Certainly the other scene would have been more theatrical—and dramatic.

In Pinero's *Iris,* there is a variation of the same situation. Iris was a sweet and charming, but quite characterless woman who was in love with a poor young man, Trenwith. He went to Canada to make his fortune, after she lost her money. Her husband had left a will depriving her of all his property if she remarried and this provision had prevented her marrying Trenwith earlier. A very rich financier, Maldonado, was also in love with her, and when Trenwith departed to Canada Maldonado insisted on leaving Iris a check book, and depositing money to her credit in the bank. As she had refused to give up her property to marry Trenwith, she declared that she would not go with him when she was poor to be a drag on him in his new enterprises. Instead she would practice the virtues of economy. Of course she is too lazy and lacking in decision of character to live on her reduced income, and she becomes Maldonado's mistress. Trenwith returns with a fortune. Iris has ceased to write to him so he does not know what has happened. The only old friend who has clung to her comes to her and tells her that Trenwith has returned, and that he, Croker, has promised to try to find out where Iris is living. Iris writes Trenwith a letter, and then as Croker protests at helping her deceive Maldonado, she tears up the missive and throws it into the wastebasket. But Croker takes a verbal message to Laurence Trenwith, and the

next morning at nine he presents himself at Iris' lodgings.

He tells her that he has been wondering whether her friends had come to her assistance on condition that she give him up—that in solitude he naturally had distorted ideas. Then he says, commenting on her charming surroundings:

Did your new lawyer manage to recover for you more than he expected? (*Struck by a new thought.*) Iris, surely you have not been angry with yourself for not fulfilling your promise to starve during my absence.

IRIS (*her elbows on the table, digging her fingers into her hair*). You—you are nearing the truth.

LAURENCE (*fervently, his lips close to her ear*). Oh, my love! my dear love! in whatever way these comforts have come to you, how can you doubt that I should be the first to rejoice that you have not, after all, been waiting for me in privation and anxiety?

IRIS (*in a hard, level tone—gently pushing him from her*). Laurence, it is about the—way in which these comforts have come to me—that I want to talk to you. (*She points to the settee and he seats himself there, a growing fear expressed in his face.*)

IRIS (*sitting upright, her body still, her eyes averted—with a little twist of her mouth*). Laurie, this charming place is not mine.

LAURENCE. No?

IRIS. That is—it is not maintained by myself.

LAURENCE. By your friends—as I supposed?

IRIS. By a friend. (*A pause.*) A friend. (*A further pause.*) Yes, there is something—in your theory——

LAURENCE (*shortly*). Oh! (*Slowly.*) You mean the condition does exist—the condition obliging you to be untrue to me in return for help? Iris——! (*With an effort she turns her head and meets his gaze.*)

IRIS (*deliberately*). It is a man-friend. (*He allows the words to sink into his brain, then he rises and advances to her. She rises with him and they stand facing each other on opposite sides of the table.*)

LAURENCE. A man-friend?

IRIS. Mr. Maldonado.

LAURENCE (*under his breath*). Maldonado?

IRIS. He is master here.

LAURENCE. Master—! I— You must speak plainer.

IRIS. He—intended to take his revenge——

LAURENCE. Revenge!

IRIS. He never rested—never rested—until——

LAURENCE. Until——?

IRIS. He was able—to cry quits with you.

[LAURENCE *recoils. Opening her eyes widely, she gives him a final look of guilt and abasement; then she collapses suddenly, dropping into her chair and laying her head and outstretched arms upon the table. He continues to stare at her for a time; ultimately, covering his face with his hands, he sinks upon the settee.*

IRIS (*lifting her head*). No, he never left me alone. There's no palliation in that, perhaps, no excuse—but he never left me alone. (*Bursting into tears.*) Oh, I meant to be poor! I meant to be poor! (*She rises and goes to the fireplace upon which she leans weeping.*)

Iris then repeats the whole story, from the time Laurence had left for Canada and Maldonado had left her the bank account, to the day when having pawned everything, even her little income the lawyers had saved, she was reduced to actual want, and Maldonado, who had kept track of her, gave her the key to the flat he had had waiting for her for months. "That was my deepest disgrace—that he seemed so certain I should find my way here," she concludes, as she sinks down sobbing and moaning on the divan. During all the long story, Laurence has not uttered a word. Frequently she would pause and look at his stricken face or try to put her hand on his shoulder, but he only drew back still silent.

When finally he does speak it is only to say that he is intensely sorry for her. He learns that Maldonado still wishes to marry her, and then he prepares to leave. Iris understands that he feels he cannot pardon her and she tries to plead her own cause. But all Laurence can say is: "I'm sorry."

After he has gone Maldonado comes in. He has picked up the torn letter in the wastebasket, and knows that Trenwith has been with Iris, and is furious with wounded pride and jealous love. Of course added to that is his own consciousness of having played a mean part, and being, in a sense, justly repaid. He is almost ready to murder

Iris, but his self-control comes to the rescue. "What an escape," he cries. "You're the sort of woman who sends a hot-blooded man to the gallows, my dear." And he drives her out into the street from which he took her. When she has shut the door, the curtain falls on him in the act of smashing up the furniture.

In intrinsic worth of the material, Galsworthy's play is superior. The fact that it led to reform measures in dealing with offenders against the law is one tribute to its truth and power, though not necessarily a proof that it is a great play. The final curtain in *Justice* falls as Cokeson, the kindly, quaint, and pious managing clerk of How and Son says soothingly to Ruth, "No one'll touch him now! Never again! He's safe with gentle Jesus." And he holds out his hand to Ruth "as one would to a lost dog." The action and the speech are characteristic of Cokeson, but they are strangely out of key with the rest of the scene, and remarkably difficult for even a good actor to make impressive. This is not an "effective curtain." Indeed the whole scene falls below Pinero's in theatrical appeal. For though Maldonado's rage finds an expression that touches the nerves of the audience, there is emotion as well as shock in the scene. In destroying Iris he has destroyed something of himself, and the breaking up of his furniture and bric-a-brac is a visible token of the inner ruin—a ruin which is just as senseless and inexcusable. That neither Maldonado nor Iris is of great significance is another consideration. For what they are the author has made the most of them.

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[1] See page 208.

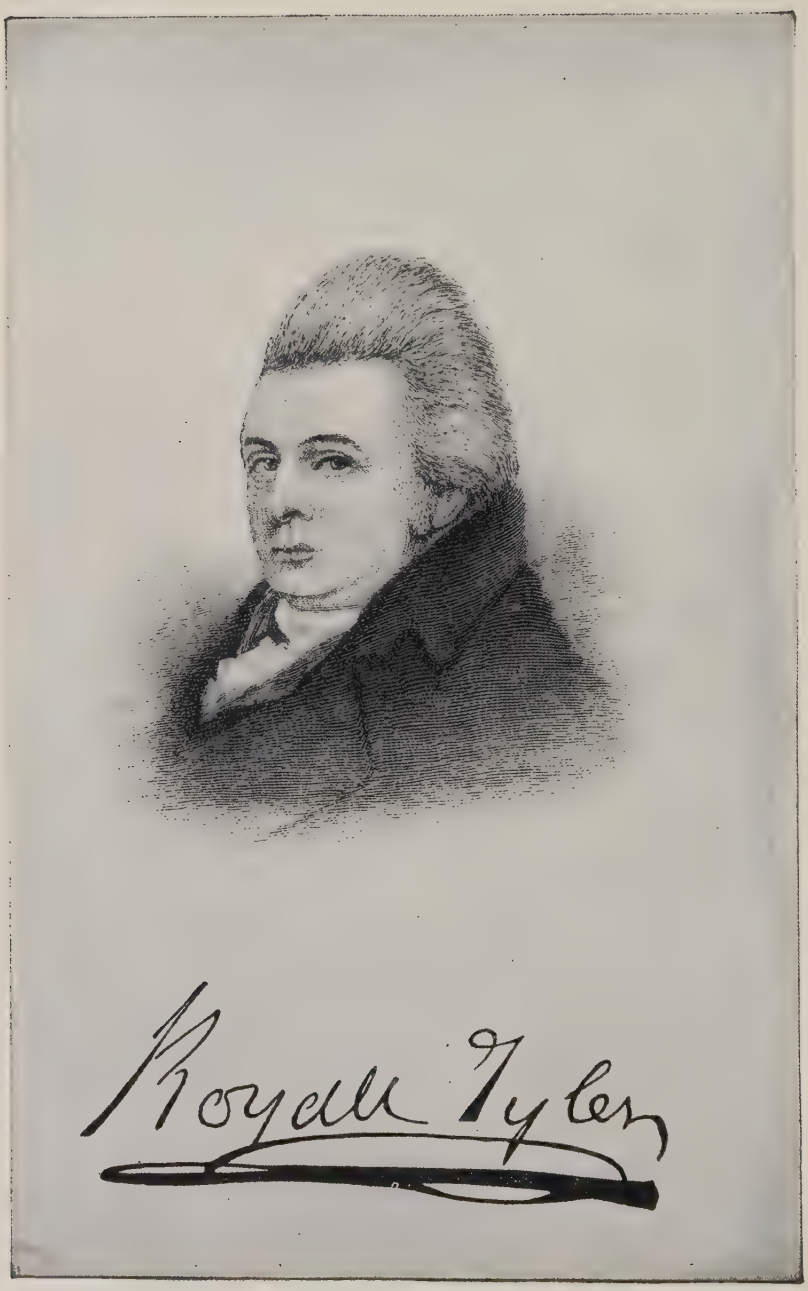
AMERICAN DRAMA

Early American Plays

THE twentieth century marks an internationalism in at least two of the fine arts. Not even an experienced art critic, confronted by such a collection of contemporary painting as the Carnegie International Exhibit can tell unaided which nation is responsible for which canvases. The reason is that all are influenced by the same tendencies. There is something of this same spirit in drama, though persons attending the play generally have a very definite idea of the author's nationality because of the settings. When these do not give the key, there is frequently little to distinguish the English from the American; the Hungarian from the French; the Italian from the Spanish. One has only to glance at the list of offerings of the Theatre Guild to realize that in America one does not necessarily see American drama. Selecting at random the year 1928, one notes that repertoire included the Hungarian Molnar's *The Guardsman;* the English Shaw's *Major Barbara;* the American O'Neill's *Strange Interlude,* and *Marco Millions.* The Civic Theatre chose its offerings almost entirely from non-American plays, among which were Ibsen's *The Wild Duck,* Chekov's *The Cherry Orchard,* and Heijermann's *The Good Hope.* There has been something like a complaint that American producers, including repertoire theater companies, give little encouragement to the American playwright. If an answer were to be made to that reproach it would probably be that the American playwright seldom writes of anything that has permanent interest, so his plays are unlikely to be interesting fifty, twenty, ten, or even five years after they are first written. It is the old story of "what is most up to date is soonest out-of-date." The case of the strictly commercial theater is a different matter, but the strictly commercial play is unlikely to have either literary or real dramatic value, and so it is of slight use to the student.

Anyone who imagines that this internationalism of the stage is new must be unfamiliar with the history of the American theater. Almost as long as there has been a stage in America there have been foreign plays performed upon it. Naturally at first these were English plays. From 1830 until after the civil war it was the custom of American producers to "pirate" French plays for comedies. Not until 1890 was an international copyright enacted, and so previous to this date it was not only easier but cheaper to adapt a European success than to share royalties with an American author.

It is still a question today whether we have an "American" drama, or "American" literature. For at least two generations, critics have been watching for the great American novel, and the great American play. Both have been announced numerous times, but somehow they still remain to be written. It is likely that they will not appear for several generations, because it will take at least a century for America to become homogeneous enough to produce any single work which will be typical of our vast country with its varied types of life. The roots of our diversity are very deep. One has but to examine the history of the colonization of America to understand that. This colonization includes not only the period from 1607 to 1732, but also those later waves of westward immigration which carried the settler across the Alleghenies, the Mississippi, the great plains, the western deserts, and the Rocky Mountains, to the Pacific. Life in each of these outposts was different from that in the community from which the pioneers had moved on. Each region had its particular dialect, its customs, its sanctions and tabus. While it is true that there was less difference between the speech of the California "Forty-Niner" and the Governor of Massachusetts than between the Lancashire mill owner and the London peer, yet the English countryman would acknowledge that the Londoner's speech and his conventions of conduct were authoritative. But no section of America ever conceded that New York, Boston, or Philadelphia should be regarded as the authoritative example of what American speech and society should be. In


Royall Tyler

fact, Boston, Philadelphia and Charleston each regarded itself as far more "American" than any of the other cities.

When it is recalled that the New England states were settled by folk who refused to conform to the ritual of the established Church in England, and regarded worldly entertainments unfavorably; that Virginia was a stronghold of Cavalier sentiment; that New York was a Dutch trading post; that Pennsylvania, originally a grant to the disfranchised Quakers, early became an asylum for refugees from that most bitter of religious conflicts, the Thirty Years' War; that Georgia was established as a colony for debtors, and Maryland as a refuge for the Catholics, one gets a glimpse of the diversities of social tradition which existed in early America. It is true that all of these people shared an independence of spirit, and the great majority of them spoke the English language and held to the English ideals. Yet the Puritans whose coreligionists and political confrères had kept the theaters of England shut for twenty years would hardly find themselves at perfect accord with Governor Dinwiddie who sponsored the first theatrical performance in America at Williamsburg, Virginia, in 1752, even though by that time the stern simplicity of New England life had been considerably softened.

The literary center of the North in 1750 was neither Boston nor New York, but Philadelphia. Franklin, it will be recalled, was a Philadelphian. He helped to make his city a center of the printing trade, established the first circulating library, and advanced the cause of American culture in numerous ways. He was a model of open-mindedness and tolerance in a rather narrow-minded community, for the Quakers, like the Puritans, frowned upon worldly amusements. Yet it was in Philadelphia that the first American dramatist was born. Thomas Godfrey was the son of the inventor of the sea quadrant. Four years younger than Washington, being born in 1736, he held a lieutenant's commission when he was twenty-two in the French and Indian War. His military career was short, as 1759 saw him managing a business in North Carolina.

While living there he wrote *The Prince of Parthia,* a tragedy in blank verse. Godfrey died in 1763 and so never saw his play performed. Four years later William Hallam, the first American to organize a road company of players, put Godfrey's drama on at the New Theatre in Southwark. The play is a tragedy of the Elizabethan type, dealing with plots for the throne of Parthia and schemes to gain the hand of the lovely Evanthe. This lady was not only the beloved of King Artabanus' two sons, but of the king himself. As Artabanus had promised Arsaces any reward he might ask even to his throne, he could not deny his son the hand of Evanthe. But this did not prevent him from conspiring to have Arsaces arrested, and Evanthe carried off by his second son Vardanes, who was also in love with the lady. Meantime Arsaces has murdered the queen's lover and the royal mother intending at first to kill Arsaces and thus avenge her lover, decided instead to kill herself. Vardanes murders Artabanus, and in the civil war which follows, Evanthe is led to believe that Arsaces is dead, so she takes poison. When the victorious Arsaces sends for her she is on the point of death and expires in his arms. Thereupon he seizes the sword of his Lieutenant-General and plunges it into his heart. Quinn[1] says of this drama: "*The Prince of Parthia* was revived by the Zelosophic Society of the University of Pennsylvania on March 26, 1915, . . . and proved an actable play, though the absence of any comedy element was noticeable. The play shows clearly the influence of *Hamlet* and of *Macbeth,* and also of Dryden's *Maid's Tragedy,* but the blank verse is flexible and dignified, and the correspondence of Godfrey proves that he conceived it with the purpose of actual stage representation, and not merely as a closet play."

Quite different is Royall Tyler's drama *The Contrast,* published in 1790, when the American nation was barely started. Here is a play dealing with New York in the days of Washington's first administration, its theme being the contrast between the American gentleman and the English fop. The first lines of the prologue, spoken not by any of the actors, nor even by the author, but by the publisher, Mr. Wignell, of Philadelphia, are worth attention:

Exult, each patriot heart!—this night is shown
A piece which we may fairly call our own;
Where the proud titles of "My Lord!" "Your Grace!"
To humble Mr. and plain Sir give place.

With all its faults, the play is the first American comedy; that is, the first comedy dealing with American life. Here for the first time appeared upon the stage that Yankee farmer, who has had so many descendants in the stage population. Jonathan is a combination of shrewdness and such unsophistication as seems hardly possible in one possessed of ordinary intelligence. Needless to say Jonathan is a popular character with the audience, whether that audience be of Washington's or Roosevelt's administration. Witness the popularity of *Way Down East.* After all, our national tastes and habits have not greatly changed in a century and a half. Colonel Manly's remarks on American uniformity in obedience to the fashion might have been uttered in 1930.

"I have often lamented the advantage which the French have over us in that particular. In Paris, the fashions have their dawnings, their routine and declensions, and depend as much upon the caprice of the day as in other countries; but there every lady assumes a right to deviate from the general *ton* as far as will be of advantage to her own appearance. In America the cry is, what is the fashion? and we follow it indiscriminately, because it is so."

In 1798, William Dunlap's *André* was produced in New York, and this too was a type of play destined to reappear over and over in American dramatic history, as patriotic plays glorifying the national history are a stock element of the drama of each nationality. *André* was rewritten in 1803 and renamed *The Glory of Columbia,* and this dramatization of the Revolution which featured Washington and the surrender at Yorktown instead of confining its story to the André incident, held the American stage until almost the middle of the nineteenth century. Dunlap wrote several American plays, his first one being *The Father, or American Shandyism,* inspired by the success of Tyler's *The Contrast.* He also wrote thirteen plays based on the dramas of the German Kotzebue, and most valuable of all

to the scholar *A History of the American Theatre,* published in 1832. In this work he bemoans the decadence of the American stage, in words that sound familiar to Americans of a hundred years later. He suggests as a remedy a national theater, and proposes, if it cannot be self-supporting, to levy a tax on "tippling houses" to make up the deficit.

It will surprise the average student of American literature to find more than a hundred authors of plays listed in this work. Some few names like John Howard Payne and Washington Irving will be familiar to all. George Washington Parke Custis, though well known in other connections, is not commonly associated with drama. Yet he wrote two Indian plays, *Pocahontas,* and *The Pawnee Chief,* besides *Baltimore Defended,* a kind of civic-pageant play in commemoration of the battle of North Point, and *The Railroad,* a drama which was enlivened by the introduction of an actual steam locomotive in the final act, which moved off blowing its whistle, to music specially composed for the occasion. In 1830, locomotive engines were not the hundred-ton giants of today.

Indian plays were popular in the early nineteenth century and Custis was not the first to write this sort of stage story. The pioneer in this field was John A. Stone, whose *Metamora* was written for Edwin Forrest. The Indians in practically all the plays purporting to picture the Red Man were studied from Cooper's philosophic savages and not from life.

Two other significant themes in early American drama should be noted: The lingering belief in the supernatural, and the problem of the Negro in the midst of an alien race. In *Superstition,* performed for the first time at Philadelphia in 1824, James Nelson Barker originated the American play based upon belief in the occult, and a generation later (1851) Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* put the Negro question on the stage. Six years later Dion Boucicault, an adoptive American dramatist, wrote *The Octoroon, or Life in Louisiana.* Whereas Mrs. Stowe's work was little more than antislavery propaganda, Boucicault's play was recognized as a true picture of "Life in Louisi-

ana," and while Northerners admired it, Southerners were equally ready to praise it. Early in 1929 this drama was revived in New York. The avowed purpose of the producers was to present something which should divert by its exaggerated rhetoric and melodramatic situations. *After Dark,* a play of the 70s by this same author, had been greeted with overflowing houses, and shrieks of laughter at its intendedly serious dialogue and situations. But the vitality of Boucicault's earlier play was too great, and the audiences were caught in its emotional appeal just as the playgoers of 1857 had been.

These plays are significant because they strike distinctively American notes which have been repeated over and over. Indian plays of varying merit will be recalled by all playgoers old enough to remember the 1890s. Milton Royle's *The Squaw Man,* and *Strongheart* by William Cecil DeMille, were two of the most popular. Mary Austin's *The Arrow Maker* is a far more consistent picture of Indian life, and perhaps for that very reason is less known to the general theater-goer. The drama which appeals to the public is that which reflects a life into which the spectators can readily enter in imagination.

Belasco's *The Girl I Left Behind Me* was inspired by the Custer Massacre, and though the interest is in the besieged white folk rather than in the attacking Indians, yet "White Fawn" and "Ladu," her father, are essential characters in the story.

The influence of New England superstitions inspired Percy MacKaye's *The Scarecrow,* and Hagerdorn's *The Witch.* Thomas' *The Witching Hour* is not precisely a play based upon a superstition, but it is at least a play dealing with something which is beyond—or perhaps below science. *The Return of Peter Grimm* ventured into the unexplored region that separates the living from those on "the other side."

As for Negro plays, there have been Edward Sheldon's *The Nigger,* O'Neill's *Emperor Jones,* DuBose and Dorothy Heyward's *Porgy,* Paul Green's *In Abraham's Bosom,* the Pulitzer prize drama of 1927, and numerous others.

Early American playwrights did not, of course, confine

their efforts to American themes. Probably the finest of dramas written before the Civil War is Boker's *Francesca da Rimini.* The story is one which has attracted many a playwright, and few have given it finer interpretations than Boker. The play has been the vehicle of some of America's most celebrated actors. E. L. Davenport appeared in the production of 1855. In 1882, Laurence Barrett revised Boker's version of the play, and made it one of his most popular offerings. Boker asked of the actor "Why didn't I receive this encouragement twenty years ago? Then I might have done something." Among Barrett's company was a young actor, Otis Skinner. In 1901, this player, by that time a star himself, revived *Francesca* again.

Although Boker's play was the best of American dramas based on a European story, it was far from being the only such play. Inspired by the success of *Francesca,* Boker himself wrote *Nydia,* and later *Glaucus,* based on Bulwer's novel, *Last Days of Pompeii, Anne Boleyn, Lenor de Guzman,* and half a dozen others. N. P. Willis composed —one cannot say created—a story of fourteenth century Milan, *Bianca Visconti,* for the actress Josephine Clifton, and later he wrote his really admirable *Tortesa the Usurer* for James Wallack, taking the story from an Italian novel, *Buried Alive.* Julia Ward Howe was responsible for *Leonora,* a story of eighteenth century Italy, in which the elder Sothern played the hero, "Count Lothair," and Matilda Heron had the name part. The rhetorical style of acting was still in vogue, for the "picture-frame stage" was not yet possible. As one can easily understand, the rhetorical is better suited to something which is supposed to have happened in some remote time and place, than to the experiences of the Jones, Smiths and Robinsons of New York, Philadelphia or Boston. There was some truth in Boucicault's statement that "All that the Americans seem to recognize as dramatic here is the caricature of eccentric character, set in a weak dramatic framework." This from the man who wrote *London Assurance* seems very much like the pot calling the kettle black.

Among the American dramatists before the Civil War, one woman achieved what might be called a triumph in

England. This was Anna Cora Mowatt Ritchie, born Ogden, daughter of Samuel Ogden of New York. At the time of Anna's birth—1819—the Ogdens were living in France. She was a precocious child, and in this modern era of prolonging childhood, the reader is inclined to wonder how far her ill health was a result of that precocity. At five she appeared in a French version of *Othello,* her part being a spectacular and not a speaking one; she was one of the judges. At fourteen she staged a translation of Voltaire's *Alzire* in her own home. At fifteen she was married, at sixteen wrote a poetical romance, had written her first play before she was nineteen, and her popular novel *The Fortune Hunter* when she was twenty-three. Two years later she wrote *Fashion,* which satirized the pretensions of the newly rich, and the efforts of such Americans to ape European customs. *Fashion* was highly successful, being performed at both New York and Philadelphia. It ran three weeks in New York, and would have drawn audiences for a longer period, but the theater was engaged for another company.

It is common for actors to take to writing plays. Pinero, Boucicault, Robertson, not to speak of Shakespeare and Molière, are part of a list which might be extended to an indefinite length. For an author to turn actor is less common, particularly when the actor is successful. Mrs. Mowatt made her stage début in 1845, as Pauline in *The Lady of Lyons.* Later she played Gertrude in her own play *Fashion.* It is recorded that she did not care very much for the rôle, and one who has read the play is not particularly surprised. Certainly Claude Melnotte would be more inspiring as a stage lover than Colonel Howard.

A second play of hers, *Armand, the Child of the People,* was produced in 1847. The famous actor E. L. Davenport played the name part, while Mrs. Mowatt was the heroine. Mr. Davenport had been Adam Trueman, the rich farmer, in *Fashion.*

It was as Pauline in *The Lady of Lyons* that the dramatist made her conquest of the English stage. The quality of the performance which she and Mr. Davenport

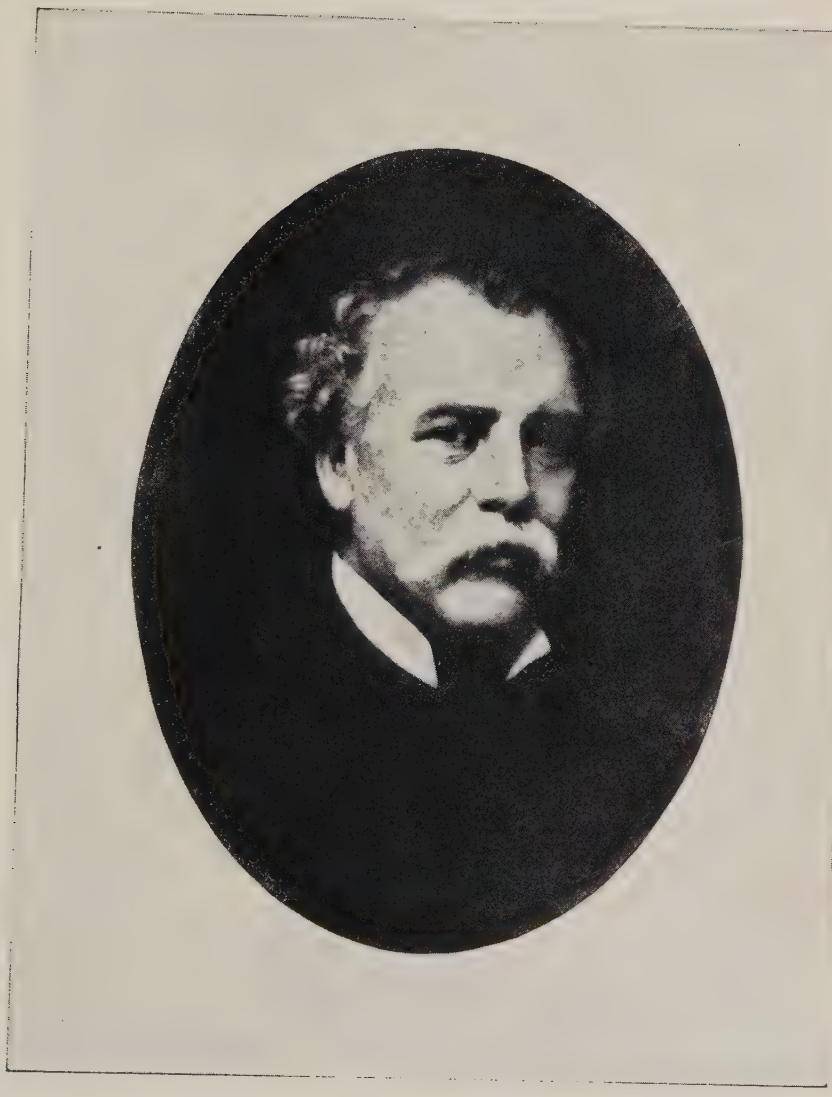
gave in Manchester in 1847 led to their being invited to take the theater in London which two years later Macready was leaving temporarily, to make an American tour. During this engagement the company played both *Fashion* and *Armand* to appreciative audiences. In Ireland she was particularly popular. Ill health necessitated her retirement from the stage in 1854. Her last appearance was as Pauline, and the ovation she received on this occasion testified to her undiminished popularity.

In 1924, the Provincetown Players revived *Fashion,* and it ran eight months in New York. Two years later it was one of the most popular attractions of the Goodman Theater in Chicago. Both in New York and in Chicago, the play was presented as a burlesque. Colonel Howard, for example, looked precisely like an animated "tintype" photograph, moving about like an automaton and talking in an equally stilted fashion. Gertrude was a model of sentimental femininity, the count a typical impostor, and Snobson the dishonest confidential clerk who preys upon his employer.

Edgar Allan Poe, who took his duties of dramatic critic seriously in 1845, went to see the play ten times before expressing his opinion of it—an opinion which is a sound criticism. After suggesting that the work is simply an imitation of *The School for Scandal,* he adds: "*Fashion* is theatrical but not dramatic. It is a pretty well arranged selection from the usual routine of stage characters and stage maneuvers—but there is not one particle of any nature beyond greenroom nature about it. No such events ever happened, in fact, or ever could happen, as in *Fashion.* Nor are we quarreling, now, with the mere *exaggeration* of character or incident. Were this all, the play though bad as a comedy might be good as a farce, of which the exaggeration of possible incongruities is the chief element. Our faultfinding is on the score of verisimilitude—in natural art—that is to say, in art based on the natural laws of man's heart and understanding."

Perhaps it was because the revival presented this play as a farce that it was so successful.

Poe's criticism is important to the student of drama



George Henry Boker

for what it implies of the pre-war theater in America, even more than as an estimate of an almost forgotten play. It reveals the tendency to imitate the drama of Europe. It also makes one wonder where audiences and critics found their standards of artistic verisimilitude.

Before the Civil War there was a far greater proportion of our population familiar with spoken drama than in 1930. All the larger cities, and even towns of ten thousand, had their stock companies. When such an actor as Davenport, Forrest, Wallack, or Macready from England, made a tour, these local companies would supply the supporting cast. Edward Sothern has pointed out, in his lectures on the stage, that this arrangement created audiences who knew good performances when they saw them. If a perusal of the English and the American drama of the first three-quarters of the nineteenth century seems to indicate that these same audiences had very little first-rate material on which to exercise their critical faculties, it must be remembered that the "old-school" actors almost invariably included Shakespeare in their repertoires, and of course Sheridan's sprightly *Rivals,* and *The School for Scandal.* Lester Wallack's name was associated with Goldsmith's *She Stoops to Conquer.* There are critics who declare that if Forrest were to appear on the twentieth century stage, audiences would find his diction "rant." Inasmuch as he has been dead so long that no one can claim to have any first-hand knowledge, that matter is one of opinion. Styles in acting do change, but at least it is certain that until 1860 a large proportion of the cultivated folk were acquainted with the best talent the theater afforded. One did not have to live in New York to keep up with the dramatic developments.

In his admirable history of the American drama,[2] Quinn tells that Augustin Daly felt every one interested in American literature should know the best work of the early American dramatists. He felt that Conrad's *Jack Cade,* Stone's *The Gladiator,* John Howard Payne's *Charles the Second,* Boker's *Francesca da Rimini,* and Bird's *The Broker of Bogota* were especially worthy of attention, and he suggested the revival of the plays of Julia Ward Howe and

Mrs. Mowatt. He does not suggest Boucicault, because that dramatist was one of his own contemporaries. The Irish dramatist was born in 1822 and died in 1890. He was nineteen when he wrote his successful *London Assurance,* and in the succeeding half century he managed to turn out at least four hundred more.

With the exception of Boker's *Francesca da Rimini,* the interest of most of these plays for the average person is the light they throw on the development of our national drama. This does not mean that they are uninteresting to read, but that they are, in general, lacking in that "only sure antidote against the opium of time—literary merit." That they were written for a different stage and for different conventions of acting is unimportant. So were the deathless creations of Sophocles, Shakespeare, and Molière.

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[1] *Representative American Plays,* 4. Arthur Hobson Quinn, The Century Co., 1917.

[2] *American Drama from the Civil War to the Present.* Harpers, 1927.

Selections from Early American Drama

I

The Contrast

This play represents the first attempt to write an American comedy of manners. Like many another such comedy, it appears to be modeled upon *The School for Scandal.* Judged purely upon its merits, it is scarcely a work to be pored over, but, as has been stated, it deserves attention on the score of having provided American drama with one of its stock characters—the Yankee farmer.

The author of *The Contrast* was born in 1757, and educated at Harvard, where he studied law. During the Revolutionary War he served on the staff of General Benjamin Lincoln. The theatrical business languished during these years, and when in 1787, Tyler was sent to New York City to help in settling Shays's Rebellion, he became deeply interested in the theater. When he wrote *The Contrast,* he had seen very few theatrical performances. In view of these facts, it is not surprising that this play hardly ranks as an original masterpiece. Even Shakespeare learned to write. Tyler produced three other works in the ten years following the staging of *The Contrast,* at least two of which were performed in Boston. After 1797, he gave his energies exclusively to the Law, in which profession he attained distinction, becoming Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Vermont.

"Jonathan," who has had such a long and popular line of descendants, makes his first appearance in the second scene of the second act. The play consists far more of dialogue than of action. The first act is divided into two scenes, the first of which consists of a conversation between Charlotte Manly and her friend Letitia, in which the reader is informed that Charlotte loves all the frivolities of life and that her brother is serious minded; that Maria Van

Rough is engaged to marry Billy Dimple, whom she does not love, and that Dimple is flirting with both Letitia and Charlotte, pretending that he wishes to break with Maria. The second scene is at Van Rough's home and consists of an exposition of the father's reasons for wishing his daughter to marry Dimple, and Maria's assurance that though her heart is not touched by Van Dumpling—which seems to be Dimple's family name, she will "endeavor to make duty and inclination go hand in hand." Mr. Transfer, the broker, interrupts this conversation by calling to talk over some business with Van Rough, and Maria, having the stage to herself, proceeds to supply the audience with further information concerning Van Dumpling's character and her own feelings.

The second act brings Charlotte and Letitia back from their shopping tour, in time to receive a call from Charlotte's brother, Colonel Manly. When his sister asks if he cannot discount his warrants for pay in the war, he replies:

"I shall ever be willing to contribute as far as it is in my power, to adorn, or in any way to please my sister; yet, I hope I shall never be obliged for this to sell my notes. I may be romantic, but I preserve them as a sacred deposit. Their full amount is justly due me, but as embarassments, the natural consequence of a long war, disable my country from supporting its credit, I shall wait with patience until it is rich enough to discharge them. If that is not in my day, they shall be transmitted as an honorable certificate to posterity that I have humbly imitated our illustrious Washington in having exposed my health and life in the service of my country without reaping any other reward than the glory of conquering in so arduous a contest."

To this his frivolous sister answers: "Well said heroics! Why, my dear Henry, you have such a lofty way of saying things that I protest I almost tremble at the thought of introducing you to polite circles in the city. The belles would think you were a player run mad, with your head filled with old scraps of tragedy; and as to the beaux, they might admire because they would not understand you."

The next scene takes place on the Mall, where Jessamy, Van Dumpling's servant, is taking a walk, and of course, in the fashion of stage folk of that time, is taking opportunity to soliloquize.

JESSAMY. Positively this mall is a very pretty place. I hope the city won't ruin it by repairs. To be sure it won't do to speak of in the same day as Ranelagh or Vauxhall. However, it's a fine place for a young fellow to display his person to advantage. Indeed, nothing is lost here; the girls have taste, and I am very happy to find they have adopted the elegant London fashion of looking back, after a genteel fellow like me has passed them. Ah! who comes here? This, by his awkwardness, must be the Yankee colonel's servant. I'll accost him.

[*Enter* JONATHAN.

Votre tres—a humble serviteur, Monsieur. I understand Colonel Manly, the Yankee officer, has the honor of your services.

JONATHAN. Sir!——

JESSAMY. I say, sir, I understand that Colonel Manly has the honor of your services.

JONATHAN. Servant! Sir, do you take me for a neger— I am Colonel Manly's waiter.

JESSAMY. A true Yankee distinction, egad, without a difference. Why, sir, do you not perform all the offices of a servant? Do you not even blacken his boots?

JONATHAN. Yes, I do grease them a bit sometimes; but I am a true blue son of liberty for all that. Father said I should come as Colonel Manly's waiter to see the world and all that; but no man shall master me; my father has as good a farm as the colonel.

JESSAMY. Well, sir, we will not quarrel about terms on the eve of an acquaintance, from which I promise myself so much satisfaction—therefore sans ceremonie——

JONATHAN. What?——

JESSAMY. I say, I am extremely happy to see Colonel Manly's waiter.

JONATHAN. Well, and I vow, too, I am pretty considerable glad to see you—but what the dogs need of all this outlandish lingo? Who may you be, sir, if I may be so bold?

JESSAMY. I have the honor to be Mr. Dimple's servant, or, if you please, waiter. We lodge under the same roof, and I should be glad of the honour of your acquaintance.

JONATHAN. You a waiter! By the living jingo you look so topping, I took you for one of the agents to Congress.

JESSAMY (*aside*). The brute has discernment notwithstanding his appearance. Give me leave to say I wonder then at your familiarity.

JONATHAN. Why, as to the matter of that, Mr.——, pray what's your name?

JESSAMY. Jessamy, at your service.

JONATHAN. Why, I swear we don't make any great matter of distinction in our state between quality and other folks.

JESSAMY. This is indeed a levelling principle. I hope, Mr. Jonathan, you have not taken part with the insurgents.

JONATHAN. Why, since General Shays has sneaked off, and given us the bag to hold, I don't care to give my opinion; but you'll promise not to tell—put your ear this way—you won't tell?—I vow I think the sturgeons were right.

JESSAMY. I thought, Mr. Jonathan, you Massachusetts men always argued with a gun in your hand. Why didn't you join them?

JONATHAN. Why, the colonel is one of those folks called the Shin—shin—dang it all, I can't speak them lignum vitæ words—you know who I mean—there is a company of them—they wear a China goose at their buttonhole—a kind of gilt thing—. Now the colonel told father and brother—you must know there are, let me see, there is *Elnathan*, Silas and Barnabas, Tabitha—no, no, she's a she—tarnation, now I have it—there's Elnathan, Silas, Barnabas, Jonathan—that's I—seven of us, six went into the wars and I staid at home to take care of mother. Colonel said it was a burning shame for the true blue Bunker Hill sons of liberty, who had fought Lord North and the Devil, to have any hand in kicking up a cursed dust against a government, which we had every mother's son of us a hand in making.

JESSAMY. Bravo!—Well, have you been abroad in the city since your arrival? What have you seen that is curious and entertaining?

JONATHAN. Oh! I have seen a power of fine sights. I went to see two marble stone men and a leaden horse that stands out of doors in all weathers; and when I came where they was, one had got no head and t'other wern't there. They said as how the leaden man was a damned tory, and that he took wit in his anger and rode off in the time of the troubles.

JESSAMY. But this was not the end of your excursion.

JONATHAN. Oh, no; I went to a place they call Holy Ground. Now I counted this was a place where folks go to meeting, so I put my hymn book in my pocket, and walked softly and grave as

a minister; and when I come there, the dogs a bit of a meeting house could I see. At last I spied a young gentlewoman standing by one of the seats, which they have here at the doors—I took her to be the deacon's daughter, and she looked so kind, and so obliging, that I thought I would go and ask her the way of the lecture, and would you think—she called me dear, and sweeting, and honey, just as if we were married; by the living jingo, I had a month's mind to buss her.

JESSAMY. Well, but how did it end?

JONATHAN. Why, as I was standing talking to her, a parcel of sailor men and boys got round me, the snarl-headed curs fell a-kicking and cursing of me at such a tarnal rate that, I vow, I was glad to take to my heels, and split home, right off, tail on end like a stream of chalk.

JESSAMY. Why, my dear friend, you are not acquainted with the city; that girl you saw was a—— (*Whispers.*)

JONATHAN. Mercy on my soul! was that young woman a harlot! Well, if this is New York Holy Ground, what must the Holy-day Ground be!

JESSAMY. You should not judge the city too harshly. We have a number of elegant fine girls here, that make a man's leisure hours pass very agreeably. I would esteem it an honour to announce you to some of them. Gad! that announce is a select word; I wonder where I picked it up.

JONATHAN. I don't want to know them.

JESSAMY. Come, come, my dear friend, I see that I must assume the honour of being the director of your amusements. Nature has given us passions, and youth and opportunity stimulate to gratify them. It is no shame, my dear Blueskin, for a man to amuse himself with a little gallantry.

JONATHAN. Girl huntry! I don't altogether understand. I never played at that game. I know how to play hunt the squirrel, but I can't play anything with the girls; I am as good as married.

JESSAMY. Vulgar, horrid brute! Married, and about a hundred miles from his wife, and think that an objection to his making love to every woman he meets! He never can have read, no, he never can have been in the room with a volume of the divine Chesterfield. So you are married?

JONATHAN. No, I don't say so. I said I was as good as married, a kind of promise.

JESSAMY. As good as married!——

JONATHAN. Why, yes; there's Tabitha Wymen, the deacon's daughter, at home, she and I have been courting a great while, and folks say as how we are to be married; and so I broke a piece of money with her when we parted, and she promised not to spark with Solomon Dyer while I am gone. You wouldn't have me false to my true love, would you?

JESSAMY. May be you have another reason for constancy; possibly the young lady has a fortune? Ha! Mr. Jonathan, the solid charms; the chains of love are never so binding as when the links are made of gold.

JONATHAN. Why, as to fortune. I must needs say her father is pretty dumb rich; he went representative for our town last year. He will give her—let me see—four times seven is—seven times four—nought to carry and one; he will give her twenty acres of land—somewhat rocky though—a bible and a cow.

JESSAMY. Twenty acres of rock, a bible and a cow! Why, my dear Mr. Jonathan, we have servant maids, or, as you would more elegantly express it, waitresses, in this city, who collect more in one year from their mistresses' cast-off clothes.

JONATHAN. You don't say so!——

JESSAMY. Yes, and I'll introduce you to one of them. There is a little lump of flesh and delicacy that lives next door, waiteress to Miss Maria; we often see her on the stoop.

JONATHAN. But are you sure she would be courted by me?

JESSAMY. Never doubt it; remember a faint heart never—blisters of my tongue—I was going to be guilty of a vile proverb; flat against the authority of Chesterfield—I say that there can be no doubt that the brilliancy of your merit will secure you a favourable reception.

The remainder of the scene is taken up with Jessamy's instructions to Jonathan on the proper way to make himself agreeable to the "waiteress." When the Yankee servant departs, Jessamy informs the audience that his purpose is to have "this blundering dog sicken Jenny with his nauseous pawings" so that she will fly to Jessamy's arms. The idea of "the contrast" is repeated in the sub-plot, which sets forth somewhat farcically what the main plot deals with in serious vein. Shakespeare made frequent use of the sub-plot, but being an expert technician, he managed to make his two stories vitally connected, whereas Tyler's episodes of Jonathan are simply "comic relief."

II

King Charles the Second

One of the most prolific contributors to the American stage was John Howard Payne, author, among many other works, of the song *Home, Sweet Home.* The opera, *Clari, or the Maid of Milan,* in which this song is found, has long since been forgotten, as have practically all the sixty plays Payne composed or translated. At the age of fifteen he wrote his first play *Julia, or the Wanderer,* and it was performed in New York that same year, which was 1806. Payne's father was a schoolmaster and when his son at the age of thirteen expressed a determination to become an actor, his father took him out of the Boston school and sent him to New York to work in a mercantile house.

The countingroom did not cure him of his fondness for the greenroom, and at eighteen he began his stage career. However he was an actor for only three years, and gave up the stage to take advantage of an opportunity for a year's study in Europe. The year was prolonged into nineteen, after which he spent ten years in his native land, and then again went abroad as consul to Tunis. He died in 1852 at the age of sixty-one, while living in this same African capital.

Charles the Second is of interest because Washington Irving assisted Payne in writing it. The play is an adaptation of a French work by Duval, who was one of the leading French dramatists of the period. Payne was living in Europe at the time of its production, 1824, and the first performance of it was given in London in May of that same year. Five months later it was acted in New York. Its very excellence is one answer to why American, and for that matter British, drama of the period made so little progress. When theatrical managers could secure adaptations or translations of successful French comedies with a very slight expense, there was no inducement to pay for original plays; and most playwrights, like other workers, must live on the proceeds of their trade.

The opening scenes of the play here reproduced are an

example of good technique. The dialogue gives information in a wholly natural fashion. Furthermore this dialogue is an integral part of the plot.

SCENE I. *The Royal Palace.*

(*Enter* ROCHESTER *and* LADY CLARA.)

LADY C. Yes, my lord, her majesty will have it that you are the chief cause of the king's irregularities.

ROCH. Oh, I'll warrant it: and of his not loving her too—is it not so?

LADY C. I did not say that; but in truth, my lord, your continual jests on the married state——

ROCH. Heaven bless it!

LADY C. Your continual ridicule of married men——

ROCH. Heaven help them!

LADY C. Your licentious example, and still more licentious poetry——

ROCH. What's coming next?

LADY C. All of these, I say, make you the most dangerous of men.

ROCH. Dangerous! My dear Lady Clara, you make me vain.

LADY C. It is well known that you are the king's prime companion in all his excesses.

ROCH. What, is my loyalty to be made my reproach? Must I not stand by my monarch in all his moods? Would you have me weep when my sovereign laughs? Would you have me whine, when my sovereign calls for a jolly song? No, no, my lady, that might have done in the days of Praise-God Barebones and the Roundheads; but times are altered.—We have a merry monarch to reign over us. A merry monarch makes a merry court—so God save the jovial king and send him boon companions!

LADY C. (*laughing*). I see it is in vain to reason with you.

ROCH. Then give over the attempt.—Let us talk of something of interest—of your merits and my most ardent flame.

LADY C. Ah me! I fear, like many other of your flames, it will but end in smoke. You talk of being desperately in love—what proof have you ever given?

ROCH. What proof? Am I not ready to give the greatest proof a man can offer—to lay down this sweet bachelor life and commit matrimony for your sake?

LADY C. Well, this last, I must say, coming from a Rochester, is a most convincing proof. I have heard *you* out, listen now to *me*.

JOHN HOWARD PAYNE

(ROCHESTER *bows.*) I will propose a bargain. If by your ascendancy over the king you can disgust him with these nocturnal rambles, and bring him back to reason——

ROCH. Your ladyship forgets one of my talents.

LADY C. Which is it?

ROCH. That of getting myself banished two or three times a year.

LADY C. And if the woman you profess to love should offer to *partake* your exile?

ROCH. I am a lost man—I surrender. That last shot reached my heart.

LADY C. (*sighing*). Ah, my lord—if that heart were only worth your head! Well, is it agreed?

ROCH. It is your will—I undertake the sacrifice—but madam, bear in mind my recompense.

LADY C. You may hope for everything. Adieu, my lord. I now begin to believe in your passion, since you are willing to make a sacrifice of it, even of your follies. (*Exit.*)

ROCH. (*alone*). A pretty task I have undertaken, truly! I—Rochester—become reformer! And, then, the convert I have to work upon! Charles, who glories in all kinds of rambling frolics! True, he has had none but pleasant adventures as yet. If I should trick him into some ridiculous dilemma? My whole life has been a tissue of follies, and I am called a man of wit. I am now to attempt a rational act, and I shall be called a madman! Well, so be it—matrimony will be sure to bring me to my senses.

[*Enter* EDWARD, *a page, languidly.*

ROCH. Ah! here comes my young protégé. How downcast he seems! How now, Edward, what's the matter with you, boy?

EDW. (*sighing*). Nothing, my lord.

ROCH. Good heaven, what a sigh to heave up nothing with! Tell me the truth this instant. Hast thou dared to fall in love?

EDW. I hope, my lord, there is no harm in indulging in an honest attachment.

ROCH. An honest attachment! A young, half-fledged page about court, who has hardly tried his wings in the sunshine of beauty, to talk of an honest attachment. Why, thou silly boy, is this the fruit of all the lessons I have given thee?

EDW. Did not your lordship tell me that one of the first duties of a page was to be zealous in his devotion to the fair?

ROCH. Yes; but I told thee to skim over the surface of beauty, just dipping your wings, like a swallow, not plumping in like a goose—I told you to hover from flower to flower like a butterfly,

not to bury yourself in one like a bee. An honest attachment! What a plebeian phrase! There's a wife and seven children in the very sound of it.

Edw. My lord, I know your talent for putting things in a whimsical light, but could you see the object of my passion——

Roch. Nay, a truce to all description. But who, pray, is the object of this honest attachment?

Edw. (*embarrassed*). My lord!

Roch. One of the maids-of-honor, I'll be bound, who has privately been petting you with sweetmeats, and lending you love-tales?

Edw. No, my lord.

Roch. Some veteran belle about court, too well known to the veteran beaux, and anxious to take in a newcomer?

Edw. No such thing, my lord.

Roch. Pray, then, give me some clue. What is the name of your beauty?

Edw. Her name, my lord, is Mary.

Roch. Mary! a very pretty, posy-like name. And what sequestered spot may Mary embellish with her presence?

Edw. She lives at the Tav—— Nay, my lord, promise not to laugh.

Roch. Far be it from me to laugh in such a serious matter. Come, the residence of this fair one?

Edw. Why, then, my lord, she inhabits the tavern of the Great Admiral in Wapping.

Roch. Usquebaugh and tobacco! the tavern of the Grand Admiral! Ha! ha! ha!—An honest attachment for some pretty barmaid.

Edw. No, no, my lord, no barmaid, I assure you. Her uncle keeps the tavern.

Roch. (*with mock gravity*). Oh, I ask pardon, then she is the heiress apparent to the tap-room, and you no doubt look forward to rise in the state through the dignities of drawer, tapster, and head-waiter, until you succeed to the fair hand of the niece and the copper nose of the uncle, and rule with spigot in hand over the fair realms of Wapping. You, who I flattered myself would have made the torment and delight of all the pretty women at court!—*you* to be so completely gulled at the very outset—the dupe of a green girl and some old rogue of a publican!

Edw. Indeed, my lord, you do the uncle injustice. He is a perfectly honest, upright man—an old captain of a cruiser.

ROCH. Worse and worse! Some old buccaneer, tired of playing the part of monster at sea, has turned shark on shore. And do you dare to appear in such a house with the dress of a royal page?

EDW. Oh! I have taken care to avoid that. I have introduced myself into the house as a music master.

ROCH. Ha! ha! ha!—I'll warrant this heroine barmaid will turn out some unknown princess carried off by the old buccaneer landlord in one of his cruisings?

EDW. Your lordship is joking; but really at times I think she is not what she seems.

ROCH. Ha! ha! ha! I could have sworn it. But silence—I hear his majesty dismount. Run to where your duty calls—we'll take another opportunity to discuss the merits of this Wapping princess.

EDW. (*goes out muttering*). There's many a true thing said in jest. I am certain her birth is above her condition. (*Exit.*)

ROCH. I must see this paragon of barmaids. She must be devilish pretty! The case admits of no delay—I'll see her this very evening. Hold! Why not fulfil my promise to Lady Clara at the same time? It is decided. I'll give his majesty my first lesson in morals this very night. But, he comes.

[*Enter* CHARLES.

After some conversation the king asks Rochester where they shall go that night, and Rochester, assuming a serious air, begs to be excused, as he has an engagement of grave nature. But Charles suspects the nature of this grave and important business and insists on knowing it, and then, of course, he insists on being included in the adventure. "Provide disguises," says the Merry Monarch. "We will go together. (*With mock gravity.*) I like to study human nature in all its varieties, and there is no school equal to a tavern. There's something of philosophy in this—one often gets a useful lesson in course of a frolic."

ROCH (*aside*). It shall go hard, but your majesty shall have one tonight. (*Aloud.*) Ah, how few, except myself, give your majesty credit for your philosophy! And yet, by many, I am considered the partaker of your majesty's excesses.

CHAS. Partaker! what a calumny! you are the promoter of them.

ROCH. The world will judge me in this instance with even more severity than your majesty has done should any disagreeable adventure be the result.

CHAS. Psha! I take the consequences on myself. Provide two seamen's dresses and a purse well filled, and arrange everything for nine precisely. Till then, farewell. (*Exit.*)

ROCH. I will attend your majesty. So! The plot is in train. I'll be off to Lady Clara and report progress. Let me see. This night the lesson. Tomorrow my disgrace. Within eight days my marriage, and then, at my leisure, to repent and reform. (*Exit.*)

The plot, thus foreshadowed, moves along of its own momentum, except perhaps for the appearance of Edward the page at an hour when music teachers would hardly be expected to be making calls. Copp, the tavern keeper, Mary's uncle, also strains the probabilities a little by inviting the two roistering sailors (Charles and Rochester) to drink tea with his daughter and the music teacher. Rochester, of course, recognizes Edward in Mr. Georgini, the music teacher, and makes him promise that no matter what happens he will not assist the king in the slightest manner but treat the monarch as though he were the sailor he pretends to be.

Rochester manages to slip out—with all the money, and leave Charles to settle the bill. As the conversation has turned upon the doings of Rochester, who learns here to his astonishment that Mary is his own sister's daughter, and as Charles has joined in the abuse of his noble companion, the monarch imagines that Rochester has left him alone out of pique and says, in an aside, it is odd some people cannot take a joke. Then the king searches in vain for money, and Copp begins to be suspicious.

CHAS. All I know is one of these honest people must have taken my purse.

COPP. Come, come, messmate—I am too old a cruiser to be taken in by so shallow a manœuvre—I understand all this—your companion makes sail, you pretend to have been robbed—it's all a cursed privateering trick—clear as day.

CHAS. Friend Copp—if you will wait till tomorrow, I'll pay you double the sum.

COPP. Double the sum! Thunder and lightning, what do you take me for? Look ye, neighbor, to an honest tar in distress, my

house and purse are open—to a jolly tar who wants a caper and has no coin at hand, drink today and pay tomorrow is the word—but to a sharking land-lubber that hoists the colors of a gallant cruiser to play off the tricks of a pirate, old Copp will show him his match any day.

CHAS. A land-lubber?

COPP. Ay, a land-lubber. D'ye think I can't see through you and your shallow sailor phrases? Who the devil are you?—none of the captains know you—what ship do you belong to?

CHAS. What ship? Why to—to— (*aside*) what the deuce shall I say.

Casting about for some way to get out of the scrape, Charles bethinks him of his watch, and when Copp looks critically at its large diamonds the king supposes he is safe. But the tavern-keeper tells him that the only way a sailor could have come by such a timepiece would be by stealing it, and he proceeds to lock up Charles in the parlor and set his servants and Edward, the supposed musician, to guard him. Copp comes back from the jeweler's with the news that the watch belongs to the king, to find that his prisoner has escaped. Between Mary's sympathy for the handsome gallant in distress and the page's loyalty to his sovereign, it was not so hard to persuade them to let him get out of the window. He had a lively time dodging the Wapping police whom Copp aroused, and arrived at the palace early in the morning much disheveled and of course very angry with Rochester. Edward, being young and fleet-footed, managed to arrive before his king, who was not exactly pleased to be met. Lady Clara was up too and listened without batting an eye to Charles' story that he had been busy gardening. She asked him to sign a pardon for an author who had "offended a person high in power," and he did so, out of gratitude for her apparent belief of his story, without even looking at the name of the offender.

Presently appear Copp and Mary, bent on returning the watch to the king. As the tavern keeper is in the midst of his description of the "gallows knaves with the hang-dog air" who had cheated him and tried to pass off the stolen watch, he suddenly recognizes his visitors, and hastens to smooth over his speech. He is about to depart when Charles

admits his knowledge of all that had happened and insists on taking up the matter of Mary's right to a suitable provision from Rochester. It transpires that the brother who had disowned Mary's mother was not this Rochester, but another son of the house. Rochester promises to provide her with a fortune, and Charles finds that he has signed a pardon for his companion in mischief. The page receives a commission in the royal army, and his "Wapping Princess" as a bride. Charles declares that he has reformed, and of course Rochester marries Lady Clara. Copp is rewarded with the watch, and goes off declaring he will make a bonfire of his tavern. It is said that Washington Irving was responsible for this character, and certainly he is the best "person of the drama," and provides one good argument against Boucicault's accusation that Americans believe caricature is character drawing.

III

Francesca da Rimini

Of this play Quinn says: "Of all American plays written before the Civil War *Francesca da Rimini* shows the most vitality. This has been due partly to the lofty conception of Lanciotto's character, the sympathetic interpretation of the medieval woman in Francesca, and the noble expression in blank verse that has rarely been excelled in English. But in addition to these literary qualities, the strength of *Francesca da Rimini* lies in its qualities as an acting play."[2]

The author, George Henry Boker, though educated for the law, devoted his energies to literary work. Born in 1823, in Philadelphia, he was graduated from Princeton in 1842, and by the time he was thirty had written seven successful plays. In view of the much writing that has been done on the subject of American "pirating" of English works, it is worth noting that Boker's first play *Calaynos* was performed in England without his permission.

It was as Lanciotto that Davenport in 1855, Barrett in 1882, and Otis Skinner in 1901 scored notable successes. Paolo was played by Otis Skinner in the Barrett revival,

"Francesca da Rimini"—The Otis Skinner Production

and by Aubrey Boucicault, son of the famous Dion, in Skinner's revival.

Boker, like all who have treated this story, found the germ of it in Dante. His adaptation of this material was highly original. He made Lanciotto, the elder brother, an ugly cripple, who found compensation for his deformity in his warrior's prowess. Instead of having a jealous cousin bring about the discovery of Francesca's love for Paolo, Boker creates the dwarf Pepe for that rôle. The fashion in which these two deformed creatures destroy each other, out of the hatred each feels for the other because each sees something of himself in the other, is an excellent piece of psychology. Of course "psychology" was not a word on everyone's lips in Boker's time, but the term is only another word for human motive: something every dramatist must understand.

Boker begins his story with the plan of Malatesta, Lord of Rimini, to marry his elder son, Lanciotto, to Francesca, daughter of Guido of Ravenna. Malatesta decides that he will not trust his strongest captain, Lanciotto, within the walls of Ravenna. The temptation to cripple the Malatestas' power by keeping him a prisoner might be too strong. He decides instead to send the handsome Paolo and writes a letter to Guido telling the father of his prospective daughter-in-law very frankly why Paolo is to escort Francesca to Rimini. Guido allows Francesca to believe that Paolo is Lanciotto when the Ravenna people are watching the cavalcade from Rimini pass below their towers. Ritta, her maid, undeceives her, and Paolo on the way home gives her only a loving brother's description of Lanciotto. But the cripple-soldier is not deceived, and he will not force himself upon the woman who does not love him, the woman whom he had never wished to marry. Lanciotto is called away to war, Paolo and Francesca wander by the brook reading the tale of Lancelot and Guinevere, and at the close of that old love-story, reënact it. Pepe, the dwarf, has been spying upon them, and he runs to Lanciotto's camp with the news. Paolo had dropped the dagger which Lanciotto had given him, and which he treasured as a pledge of brotherly affection. Pepe declares that Paolo gave it to

him to be used to kill Lanciotto. But the captain kills the dwarf and then rushes back to Rimini to demand the truth of Paolo, or rather to beg him to deny the truth. When both Paolo and Francesca affirm their guilt he kills them and himself. The sharpness of the tragedy lies in the devoted love of the two brothers, both of whom fell in love at sight with Francesca.

The first scene gives two of the principal *motifs* of the play: Pepe's malevolence, and Paolo's devotion. As Paolo and numerous nobles of Malatesta's court are idling in the gardens of Rimini, Pepe enters, laughing violently.

PAOLO. Why do you laugh?
PEPE. I'm laughing at the world.
It has laughed long enough at me, and so
I'll turn the tables. Ho! ho! ho! I've heard
A better joke of Uncle Malatesta's
Than any I e'er uttered. (*Laughing.*)
ALL. Tell us, tell us, fool.
PEPE. Guess it, guess it, fools.
PAOLO. Come, disclose, disclose!
PEPE. He has a match afoot.—
ALL. A match!
PEPE. A marriage.
ALL. Who?—who?
PEPE. A marriage in his family.
ALL. But, who?
PEPE. Ah! there's the point.
ALL. Count Paolo?
PEPE. No.
1ST NOBLE. The others are well wived. Shall we turn Turks?
PEPE. Why there's the summit of his joke, good sirs.
By all the sacred symbols of my art—
By cap and bauble, by my tinkling bell—
He means to marry Lanciotto! (*Laughs violently.*)
ALL (*laughing*). Ho!—
PAOLO. Peace! peace! What tongue dare echo yon fool's laugh?
Nay, never raise your hands in wonderment;
I'll strike the dearest friend among ye all
Beneath my feet, as if he were a slave,
Who dares insult my brother with a laugh!

The atmosphere of Stephen Phillips' play is that of

nineteenth century England. Boker had steeped himself in medieval Italy, and he makes his characters speak in the unrestrained accents of thirteenth century Guelphs and Ghibellines. When Malatesta, father of Lanciotto and Paolo, tells Lanciotto that Guido of Ravenna is suing for peace, after being defeated by Lanciotto, that grim soldier replies that the tyrant of Ravenna is only sparring for time to reorganize his forces. When his father asks what he would have instead of peace he replies:

I'd see Ravenna burn
Flame into heaven and scorch the flying clouds;
I'd choke her streets with ruined palaces;
I'd hear her women scream with fear and grief,
As I have heard the maids of Rimini.
All this I'd sprinkle with old Guido's blood.
And bless the baptism.

MALATESTA. You are cruel.

LAN. Not I;
But these things ache within my fretting brain.
The sight I first beheld was from the arms
Of my old nurse, her husband hacked to death
By the fierce edges of these Ghibelins.
One cut across the neck—I see it now,
Ay, and have mimicked it a thousand times,
Just as I saw it, on our enemies.—
Why, that cut seemed as if it meant to bleed
On till the judgment. My distracted nurse
Stooped down and paddled in the running gore
With her poor fingers; then a prophetess,
Pale with the inspiration of a god,
She towered aloft, and with her dripping hand
Three times she signed me with the holy cross.
'Tis all as plain as noon today. Thus she spake:—
"May this spot stand till Guido's dearest blood
Be mingled with thy own!" The soldiers say
In the close battle when my wrath is up,
The dead man's blood flames on my vengeful brow
Like a red planet; and when war is o'er
It shrinks into my brain, defiling all
My better nature with its slaughterous lusts.
Howe'er it be, it shaped my earliest thought
And it will shape my last.

When Malatesta tells his son that he has contracted a marriage for him with the daughter of that bitterest enemy, Lanciotto says: "My blood shall never mingle with his race," whereat his father counters: "According to your nurse's prophecy, Fate orders it." Lanciotto suggests that if someone must marry Guido's daughter, Paolo is the logical person. "I am a soldier; from my very birth, Heaven cut me out for terror, not for love." But old Malatesta is firm in his purpose that Lanciotto shall be Francesca's husband. When his father has gone, the son utters all the stored-up bitterness of his distorted life.

LAN. Ho! I have found my use at last—What, I—
I, the great twisted monster of the wars,
The brawny cripple, the herculean dwarf,
The spur of panic, and the butt of scorn—
I be a bridegroom! Heaven, was I not cursed
More than enough when thou didst fashion me
To be a type of ugliness—a thing
By whose comparison all Rimini
Holds itself beautiful? . . .
Pah! it is nauseous! Must I further bear
The sidelong, shuddering glances of a wife?
. . . And a fair wife too,
Francesca, whom the minstrels sing about!
Now, in the battle, if a Ghibelin
Cry "Wry-hip! hunchback!" I can trample him
Under my stallion's hoofs; or haggle him
Into a monstrous likeness of myself:
But to be pitied,—to endure a sting
Thrust in by kindness, with a sort of smile!—
'Sdeath! it is miserable.

A great part of the force of this bitter soliloquy, as of the passionate outburst to his father, lies in the fact that, as Lanciotto says to his brother:

Men call me gentle, courteous, brave.—They lie!
I'm harsh, rude, and a coward. Had I nerve
To cast my devils out upon the earth
I'd show this laughing planet what a hell
Of envy, malice, cruelty, and scorn
It has forced back to canker in the heart
Of one poor cripple.

Of course he slanders himself. His real nobility is shown in his charge to Paolo to tell Francesca exactly how he looks, and if she shrinks from the idea of wedding him, to assure her that neither her father, Guido, nor herself shall suffer for that shrinking. He suggests that Paolo, if he find her fair, wed her himself, "the peace will stand as firm."

At Ravenna, the Cardinal tries in vain to persuade Guido not to deceive his daughter into believing that Lanciotto is like Paolo, but Guido says he is going to leave it to the Malatestas to do the explaining. When Francesca discovers that her father has deliberately deceived her by allowing her to think that Paolo is Lanciotto, she, like a high-spirited noblewoman, regards the trick as something mean and unworthy of both her father's position and her patriotism. She does not conceal from Paolo that she feels that Lanciotto has slighted her in sending another for her, nor that she has a poor opinion of that other who lets himself be made "a common carrier of others' love." Of course this resentment is only a diverted expression of her love for Paolo. Deceived by her coldness, Paolo tells her he wishes himself in his brother's place, and she pretends to believe he meant he would like to be in Rimini, and have Lanciotto in Ravenna. The result of their bickering is in Francesca's words. "I quite forgot Count Lanciotto."

PAOLO (*aside*). I too, shame on me.
FRAN. Does he resemble you?
PAOLO. Pray, drop me, lady.
FRAN. Nay, answer me.
PAOLO. Somewhat—in feature.
FRAN. Ha!
Is he so fair?
PAOLO. No, darker. He was tanned
In long campaigns, and battles hotly fought
Whilst I lounged idly with the troubadours,
Under the shadow of his watchful sword.
FRAN. In person?
PAOLO. He is shorter, I believe.
But broader, stronger, more compactly knit.

FRAN. What of his mind?
PAOLO. Ah, now you strike the key!
A mind just fitted to his history
An equal balance twixt desert and fame.
My love might weary you if I rehearsed
The simple beauty of his character;
His grandeur and his gentleness of heart,
His warlike fire, and peaceful love, his faith,
His courtesy, his truth.

No small part of the tragedy is that Paolo is speaking the deepest convictions of his heart, and that Lanciotto deserves his brother's high praise. When Francseca with her father and his spying company of attendants have reached Rimini, Lanciotto learns that his bride has not been told of his deformities and he offers to release her, and keep truce with Ravenna all the same. But she remains true to her promise to Guido, and assures Lanciotto that she wishes to go on with the marriage.

Lanciotto, being himself the soul of honor, believes that she is telling the truth, and pours out his rapture and his devotion in a soldierly speech which is yet full of a lover's homage. The height of his exaltation measures the depth of his fall.

The bridal ceremony is scarcely completed before the alarm has sounded the news that the Ghibellines are up again. But even as Lanciotto gave Francesca the bridegroom's salute, he realized that she did not love him. He adjures Paolo to tell him the cause of her behavior, and to confess if they love each other. He has accustomed himself to do without women's love, he says, but he cannot bear a shadow between himself and his loved young brother Paolo. Furthermore he declares he will never claim Francesca unless he has her love. He welcomes the call to war, and rides away calling to all "a soldier's short farewell."

The final act is a triumph of emotional intensity, which never loses its power of suspense until the very end. Francesca, true daughter of her clime and era, is wholly absorbed in her love for Paolo. He, however, is torn between his honor, his love for his brother and his passion

for his brother's wife. It is Paolo who after the first declaration in the garden feels that hell is a small price to pay for their love, saying:

> Have we not touched the height of human bliss?
> And if the sharp rebound may hurl us back
> Among the prostrate, did we not soar once?—
> Taste heavenly nectar, banquet with the gods
> On high Olympus? If they cast us, now,
> Amid the furies, shall we not go down
> With rich ambrosia clinging to our lips,
> And richer memories settled in our hearts?

But it is also Paolo who declares that he cannot stay in Rimini. Francesca says:

> Ah, you men
> Can talk of love and duty in a breath;
> Love while you like, forget when you are tired,
> And salve your falsehood with some wholesome saw. . . .
> PAOLO. What couldst thou ask for that I have not given?
> With love I gave thee manly probity,
> Innocence, honor, self-respect and peace.
> Lanciotto will return, and how shall I—
> O shame to think of it!—how shall I look
> My brother in the face? take his frank hand?
> Return his tender glances? I should blaze
> With guilty blushes.

To this Francesca replies by asking:

> Thou canst forsake me then
> To spare thyself a little bashful pain?

and the interview proceeds with argument and entreaty until at last Francesca says:

> Kill me, but do not leave me. I will laugh—
> A long gay, ringing laugh—if thou wilt draw
> Thy pitying sword and stab me to the heart!
> [*Enter* LANCIOTTO *behind.*
> Nay, then one kiss.
> LAN. (*advancing between them*). Take it; 'twill be the last.

When Paolo and Francesca both affirm their guilt, each denying that the other is to blame, when Paolo not only

refuses to fight Lanciotto for striking him, but even will not be stirred when Francesca is stabbed, Lanciotto thrusts a dagger into Paolo's hand and forces him to fight. When Malatesta and Guido rush in, Lanciotto says:

> Father, here it is—
> The blood of Guido mingled with our own
> As my old nurse predicted. And the spot
> Of her infernal baptism burns my brain
> Till reason shudders. . . . Why, how still they lie!
> A moment since they walked and talked, and kissed!
> Defied me to my face, dishonored me!
> They had the power to do it then; but now,
> Poor souls, who'll shield them in eternity?
> Father, the honor of our house is safe.
> I killed thy son for honor: thou mayst chide.
> O God! I cannot cheat myself with words!
> I loved him more than honor, more than life—
> This man, my Paolo, this stark bleeding corpse!
> Here let me rest, till God awake us all.
>
> [*Falls on* PAOLO'S *body.*

[2] *Representative American Plays.* Arthur Hobson Quinn. The Century Co., 1917.

American Drama

From 1860 to 1900

When society was organized after the Civil War, the theater, among other things, found itself confronting new conditions. The stock companies in such cities as Mobile or Cincinnati gradually disappeared. In the year 1872 Lawrence Barrett took his whole company on a tour instead of doing as had formerly been the custom, that is appearing with the local companies in the different towns as his support. Four years later an actor-manager carried not only his company but his scenery. Of course this adding of scenery to the transportation bills sharply limited the plays, and slowly the repertoire company and the stock company were replaced by the single traveling play, that is, in all except the cities large enough to supply new audiences. It was because New York was able to maintain stock companies that it became the theatrical center of America.

It was natural that the Civil War should produce a flood of war plays and perhaps equally natural that practically none of the earlier ones should be of sufficient merit even to enumerate in this survey. A generation later Bronson Howard and William Gillette could view the conflict in perspective and so write something based upon it which would have the stamp of truth instead of mere actuality. The first American dramatist to appear after the war was Augustin Daly. Indeed, Quinn says: "Modern American drama begins with Augustin Daly." An examination of Daly's career makes this remark just a little puzzling.

Daly began by adapting a German play, *Leah the Forsaken,* a picture of the persecution of the Austrian Jews in the eighteenth century. He followed up that success by borrowing material from other German, French and English works. He dramatized Reade's novel, *Griffith Gaunt,* dealing with eighteenth century English criminal law. Trollope

furnished him with material for *Divorce,* Wilkie Collins for *Man and Wife,* Sardou for *Taming a Butterfly* and *Hazardous Ground.* The last play he wrote was a dramatization of *Pickwick Papers.* Wherein, one may ask, lies his claim to Quinn's estimate? The answer is that he "Americanized" some of these foreign plays, and that he did write some "original" dramas picturing American life. *Under Gaslight* was a melodrama of New York life. It has a villain who pursues the heroine, and even throws her off the pier into North River, and most moving of all, the heroine's protector, a battle-scarred soldier, is bound to a railway track by that same pursuing villain to be mangled by the approaching locomotive. But of course the heroine manages to save him.

It was Daly who deplored the neglect of American drama and urged revivals of some of it; who said that Boker might have written a tragedy of Kentucky instead of Italy; that Bird's *Gladiator* (Spartacus), might have been an Indian chief. In short, he approved of American material for plays, but he certainly gave no encouragement to American playwriters. And Mr. Quinn himself has not omitted anything from Daly's pen in his volume of *Representative American Plays.* Rather Daly is significant because he understood the taste of his audiences and knew what sort of American touches would be liked.

The "dean of American dramatists" is a title which belonged to Bronson Howard (1842-1908), and he too began his playwriting by adapting a foreign work. *Fantine* was the dramatization of the story of Cosette from Hugo's *Les Miserables.* This was written and produced in Detroit, his birthplace, in 1864. The next year he went to New York, because he knew that that was the city where successful playwrights were made. He had been sent east five years before by his father, to prepare for Yale, but he never matriculated, as his eyes failed. In 1865 he was attached to the staff of the *Tribune.* He perceived that American drama, so called, was imitative both in manner and in matter. Howard was not sufficiently an innovator to write truly realistic plays, nor did he for several years learn to create real characters. It was Daly who remarked of

Howard's *One of Our Girls* that the hoydenish young person who is the heroine would have shocked the well-bred families of Boston or New York quite as much as she did the Europeans among whom the author chose to put her for contrast. Howard was writing his plays from the European outlook instead of making any serious studies of American life. It is always easier to depict peculiar or shocking persons effectively than to present well-bred people whose claim to interest is that they are involved in some situation of social significance, or of human interest. The first play, which was a sincere and unexaggerated picture of American society, was *Young Mrs. Winthrop.* Its theme is the destructive influence of business and social preoccupations upon family life.

The Henrietta is the first of the "business" plays of America, and may be said to have contributed another type to the distinctively American drama. It cannot be said that money is new as a dramatic element. Aside from *The Merchant of Venice,* which deals with the adventures of Bassanio, the fortune-hunter, and Shylock's bond with Antonio the merchant, there were numerous plays in which money changes the turn of the story, written before *The Henrietta.* But the convention of Europe is that while the possession of money is admirable, the making of it is not. Hence it is quite proper to represent a man as suddenly inheriting a fortune, or having a lost ship reappear, but preoccupation with the actual work of making money did not belong in "polite" drama.

The Henrietta was a great success upon the stage, its two leading rôles being played by William Crane and Stuart Robson. It took in at the box office nearly $500,000 in sixty-eight weeks; and this in the year 1887, when prices ranged from two dollars to fifty cents, instead of from four to one dollar. Its theme is the struggle of two Nicholas Vanalstynes, father and son, for control of the stock market in Wall Street. Read in cold type it shows glaring improbabilities, but these, we are assured, passed unnoticed on the stage, perhaps because the audience was too busy watching the stock ticker, as it realistically ticked off the son's fortune out of existence. The father was saved by the noble

but apparently frivolous Bertie, who appears in the nick of time with the money which father had settled on him earlier. *The Henrietta* may be regarded as the pioneer in a field which was later to produce such plays as *The Lion and the Mouse,* Pollock's dramatization of Norris' novel *The Pit,* and Sheldon's *The Boss.*

Howard's best play is probably his *Shenandoah,* produced in 1888 in Boston and the following year in New York. The New York cast included such names as Wilton Lackaye, Henry Miller, Effie Shannon and Viola Allen, who was also in the Boston performance. Howard had the best actors of the day to help make his plays successful. Probably his greatest contribution to American drama is the creation of a "local dramatic market for modern wares," as Montrose J. Moses phrases it. This same scholar remarks of Howard: ". . . It is surprising how little his plays reflect the solid character of his intellect. His dramas were mostly received with enthusiasm, netting him a comfortable fortune. Yet, regarding their permanence, there is doubt for the very reason that they were cast in a mould . . . which held only the froth of manners."[1]

Shenandoah was a war play with the complication of old West Point classmates separated in their allegiances, one holding to his state and the other to the nation. Of course the Northern sympathizer, Colonel Kerchival West, is in love with the sister of the Southern colonel, Robert Ellingham. Viola Allen played this rôle, and it was a spectacular one. The most thrilling scene Gertrude has is at the end of the third act when she rallies the fleeing soldiers of West's command and cheers him as he rides on her horse to join Sheridan.

A better war play, probably inspired by the success of Howard's *Shenandoah,* was William Gillette's *Secret Service,* made known in Philadelphia in 1895 and the following year in New York, where the author, appearing as Lewis Dumont, the secret service officer, made it successful both in that city, on the road in America, and in London. It is of interest that an earlier play of Gillette's, *Held by the Enemy,* is said to have influenced Howard to write *Shenandoah.* Gillette is remembered as an actor even more

than a playwright, though he wrote a number of stage successes, such as *Too Much Johnson, Sherlock Holmes, All the Comforts of Home,* and *Esmeralda,* besides a dozen less important works. *Secret Service* is one of the "most played" American dramas. By 1917, twenty years after its New York première, it had been performed 1791 times. Though Gillette's career carries him through nearly three decades of the twentieth century, nothing he has done surpasses *Secret Service.*

One of the most popular writers of comedy from 1870 to the end of the century was Edward Harrigan. As his name indicates, he was of Irish descent, his family having emigrated to Canada in the eighteenth century, and attained some prominence there. Edward Harrigan was the son of a sea captain and was born in New York in 1845. As his own mother died, and he did not get along with his stepmother, he ran away, and managed to cover a great deal of territory before reaching San Francisco, where he obtained a part in the company of Lotta, otherwise Charlotte Crabtree, one of the stage idols of the day.

He left her company to form a partnership with a comedian for the performance of vaudeville sketches, and thus made his way back to New York, where they appeared in 1870. Five years later Harrigan had formed another partnership with Tony Hart, and they were, together, making that series of plays on "The Mulligans" famous and profitable. In those days the great bulk of our immigrants were from Ireland and Germany, and the contrast between their ways and those of the country to which they had come, but more than all the lively contempt which the Irish and the German-American mutually entertained, provided Harrigan with material for amusing farce and comedy which had its source in realism if not in reality. Harrigan acted in his own plays and the rôle of Dan Mulligan was one of his greatest successes. The first of these delectable Mulligan plays was produced in 1873, and the tenth, *Dan's Tribulations,* in 1884.

The Mulligans were not Harrigan's sole contribution to the stage. In 1882 he wrote *Squatter Sovereignty,* and in 1903 *Under Cover,* both notable successes.

Harrigan wrote all his dramas around the lives of the common people because, he said, their trials and troubles, hopes and fears, joys and sorrows are more numerous and more varied than those in other walks of life. It is to be regretted that his plays are out of print, all the more that Dan and Cordelia Mulligan, Katrina Lochmuller, the Maguires and McIntyres have disappeared from our midst. They have become indistinguishable from the Smiths, Bakers, and Robinsons who once were diverted with their differences from themselves. Harrigan was a student as well as a creator of theatrical works, and Molière was his model. When the famous French actor Coquelin, for whom Rostand wrote *Cyrano,* visited America, Harrigan carried on the conversation in French.

Another entertainer equally popular, if less artistic, was Charles Hoyt, one of whose farces *A Trip to Chinatown* set a new mark for a "long run" when it was produced in 1891, and taken off in 1893 after its six hundred and fiftieth performance. Second only to this play was his *A Texas Steer,* which, though like all of Hoyt's plays, it owes its entertaining quality to caricature, still has enough genuine humanity in it to make some of the speeches stay in the minds of the audience. In general, however, Hoyt's plays were simply witty. He did not possess, or at least he did not put upon the stage, that understanding of character which permeated Harrigan's work and made it truly humorous as well as amusing.

Another writer of comedy—of a very different sort—was William Dean Howells. It is customary to refer to his plays as "closet drama," but one critic points out that in the nineteenth century there was no market for the one-act play except among amateurs, and that Howells' long play *A Counterfeit Presentment* was successfully staged by Lawrence Barrett, so it is unfair to dismiss his plays as unsuited for the stage. Their literary merit has preserved them, and his farces deserve a place in any consideration of American comedy of manners. Trivial as are the situations in these little plays, the people in them are never caricatures.

As William Archer has so clearly revealed in his book

The Old Drama and the New, the goal toward which modern drama has been steadily moving is that of a faithful representation of life as it is. One scholar has loosely characterized the Elizabethan drama as that of rhetoric, Restoration comedy as the drama of conversation, and the present-day product as the drama of imitation. This development has inevitably been confused and irregular, since each period produced plays which had imitation, rhetoric and conversation as their distinguishing characteristic. Indeed, all of these elements were frequently combined in one play.

The drama of imitation aims at the presentation of well-rounded character instead of types. It is harder to create a character who shall amuse by his naturalness than one which will provoke laughter by his exaggerated mannerisms and conduct. In a word, the great achievement in literature, whether it be for the stage or for the library, is truthfulness. Truth or reality is too often confused with facts, or actuality. These are really two entirely separate matters, with no necessary connection. Actuality is the record of outward circumstance; reality is the record of what Wordsworth called "the life of things," of the changeless spirit beneath changing externals. The difference between the two can be seen by comparing Jonathan in *The Contrast,* with Falstaff in *Henry IV,* or in *The Merry Wives of Windsor.* Jonathan depends for his appeal to our sense of the ridiculous almost entirely upon externals: his peculiarities of speech, his ignorance of New York. Today, when his speech is scarcely less strange than that of Jessamy, and when the New York of 1787 is as unfamiliar to the audience as it was to him, Jonathan is something of a bore. But Falstaff, who talks precisely like Prince Hal, remains a delight after three hundred years. It is not from any superficial mannerism that he is distinctive, but from what he *is.* Even his corpulence is the emblem of his laziness and self-indulgence.

Jonathan, dull as he is, was a type. He represented an attempt to bring something from contemporary American life into the drama. Types were the accepted dramatic convention in most nineteenth century plays of the Eng-

lish language, whether American or English. But French realism was affecting American fiction, and Howells, James, Mary Wilkins and Sarah Orne Jewett were striving to portray their persons of the story without exaggeration. Howells said that to spin a yarn for a yarn's sake, instead of for the sake of revealing the complex life of the human spirit, was an occupation only for the unenlightened, groping about in ignorance of the continental masterpieces. Drama has always been an index of the popular taste in fiction, and the realistic movement among the novelists found its counterpart on the stage.

Two pioneers in the new style were James A. Herne (1839-1901) and James Steele Mackay (1842-1894). Both were born "upstate" in New York, Steele in Fort Porter, now a suburb of Buffalo, and Herne at Cohoes. Both were distinguished actors as well as authors, but there the likeness ends. Herne's name was originally Ahearn, and his ancestry Irish. He was an example of the self-made man, having received but a rudimentary education. After working at a variety of occupations to earn his living he ran away, not to sea, as Harrigan had, but to Troy, New York, where he secured a part in that perennial play *Uncle Tom's Cabin.* However, in 1859 Troy, like most fair-sized towns, had its own stock company, and Herne also played minor rôles in Shakespearean productions of which James B. Roberts played the leads. His experiences in stock included engagements at Albany, Baltimore, and Washington. He managed the Grand Opera House of New York in 1869, and toured the country as leading man for Lucille Western, whose sister Helen was Herne's first wife.

At this period the popularity of Charles Dickens was at its height and, the international copyright being nonexistent, adaptations and dramatizations of his novels were numerous. Herne played Bill Sykes, Caleb Plummer, Daniel Peggotty and Captain Cuttle in these various Dickens' productions. The influence of this novelist upon Herne was to be made evident when the actor turned to authorship.

Herne's first work as a writer was like that of most beginning American dramatists, an adaptation of material

from the pen of some European. In 1879, with the assistance of David Belasco, Herne dramatized Gaboriau's *Within an Inch of His Life.* Other works on which these two collaborated were *Marriage by Moonlight* and *Chums,* later christened *Hearts of Oak,* a highly successful melodrama showing the influence of Dickens. Both of these were founded on English plays. Up to this time he simply followed the conventional trends. In 1878 he had married Katherine Corcoran, a talented actress, and hers was thereafter the dominating influence in his work, both as an actor and as a playwright. Instead of being content to produce commercially successful plays, he became possessed of the artist's ambition to create character in his drama. Most dramatists realize that this is the goal of their art, but to recognize a goal and to obtain it are quite different matters. Herne had the power and the willingness to criticize his own work, and in this he had a powerful ally in Mrs. Herne. He knew that *Drifting Apart, The Minute Men* and even *Shore Acres* lacked in art. He produced two plays which were intensive character studies, *Margaret Fleming* and *Griffith Davenport.* The first is a study of the character of an American gentlewoman, thrown into relief by an equally truthful study of her charming but rather characterless husband. *Griffith Davenport* is a Civil War play, and according to competent critics the best one yet produced, because it contains the best character drawing. The plot is a variation of the usual clash of Northern and Southern ideas. Herne intensifies the conflict by narrowing its limits. Incidentally it is worth noting that the tragic environment is always a sharply restricted one. Griffith Davenport is a Southern circuit rider, whose religious mysticism convinces him that slavery is against the laws of God. He is a slave owner by inheritance, and the woman he marries believes in the divine sanction of the black man's servitude, and cannot sympathize with him. When the conflict comes, not only do Davenport's children take different sides, but he is obliged to support his nation while his wife remains loyal to her state, Virginia. For some reason this play, produced in 1899, was not a popular success. William Archer, on one of his visits to America, remarked that he

found it hard to forgive this country its failure to appreciate *Griffith Davenport.*

After his failure to interest any manager in *Margaret Fleming,* Herne wrote another play which was no less a character study, but which had enough melodrama in it to secure its acceptance. This was *Shore Acres,* the finest, if not the first, of rural New England plays. Thirty years after it was first produced in 1892 it was still acted in stock. The charm of the play is in the character of Uncle Nat Barry, the man to whom what the world calls success is unimportant in comparison with human values. The uncritical appreciated the struggles between Nat and his grasping brother Martin, particularly the one in which Martin tried to prevent Nat from lighting the signal lamp in the lighthouse. The critical appreciated the fact that Uncle Nat, and indeed all the characters, had been drawn without exaggeration; drawn so well that in the final scene, when he was alone on the stage, he could convey to the audience what he was thinking, as he filled the children's Christmas stockings and closed up the house, without indulging in a soliloquy.

The failure of his two most sincere character studies determined Herne to return to something more specifically theatrical, so he wrote *Sag Harbor* later in 1899, which was really a revision of *Hearts of Oak.* He brought to the old melodrama his maturer craft and deeper knowledge of human motives. It was a success commercially and Herne played in it until his death in 1901, after which it continued with some changes in the cast. Mr. Herne's two daughters, Chrystal and Julie, played the principal women's rôles in this production.

Steele Mackaye belonged to a family of wealth and position, and most important of all, of cultivated tastes and high ideals. His father counted among his friends Emerson, Garrison and Lincoln, and was a connoisseur in art. Steele studied art first in Newport under Hunt, and later at the Beaux Arts in Paris. His studies were interrupted by the Civil War, and he came home to enter the army where he attained the rank of major. After retiring from the service he returned to Europe to recover his health and met Del-

Steele MacKaye as "Hamlet"

sarte, whose ardent disciple be became. The Franco-Prussian War interrupted Delsarte's career and left him destitute. When Mackaye heard of this he immediately arranged to give a lecture at Harvard and sent the proceeds, some ten thousand francs, to his old friend. Delsarte died the next year bequeathing his manuscripts to Mackaye.

There are few figures in the dramatic history of America so tempting to the biographer as this man, chiefly on account of his eager, critical, restless mind. He was an actor, a playwright, an inventor of various devices for the stage, an originator of safety devices such as the fireproof curtain, fire extinguishers on each floor, and many provisions regarding fire prevention, long before the law required them. He was a director of outstanding ability. He devised the famous Spectatorium for the World's Fair in 1893, a project which failed not because it was impracticable, but because it was caught in the financial panic of that disastrous year. It rose from the ruins as the Hippodrome, but this was after Mackaye's death in 1894. At his funeral Henry Irving sent this greeting to a fellow Hamlet, "Goodnight, sweet prince."

It was Steele Mackaye who said, "Plays are not written. They are re-written." He wrote his own thus. *Hazel Kirke* was originally *An Iron Will,* and *Paul Kuvar* was played in May of 1887 as *Anarchy,* receiving its new name and new form in December of that same year. *A Noble Rogue* in 1888, became *Money Mad* in 1889. *Hazel Kirke* was "the first native melodrama, without a villain," and it was also one of the outstanding successes of American drama. Next to this drama in lasting popularity was his *Paul Kuvar,* a play of the French Revolution. Of this his son Percy Mackaye says: "In *Paul Kuvar* he wrote the first native play builded technically upon mass effects: that is, the *ensemble* situations and the dialogue of the mob were structurally (as in *Cyrano* and *The Weavers*) a part of the plot and motivation, not introduced merely for sound or spectacle. In this play, permeating the whole flowing conflict of the individuals, the mass spirit of the French Revolution surged with the mob of Paris, clutching hands with the mass spirit

of the American audience, beyond the footlights. Through the chink of the stage 'wings,' as a boy I often watched that huge, staring breathlessness—the audience—with a kind of awe, while listening to my father's voice in the lines: 'The torch of liberty which should light mankind to progress, when left in madmen's hands, kindles that blaze of anarchy, whose only end is ashes.' ''[4]

Steele Mackaye represents the drama of transition; the change from the sensational scene to that of quiet power.

Clyde Fitch (1865-1909) was a playwright whose skill, cleverness and popularity prevented his developing into a great dramatist. In nineteen years he produced fifty-five plays. Eight of these were adaptations from the French or the German, and one was the dramatization of Mrs. Wharton's novel, *The House of Mirth.* Such a record of original production from a man not forty-five is remarkable, and probably if he had lived longer Fitch might have given his work the one thing it needed to ensure its permanence: depth. As it is he has left vivid pictures of New York, minute observation of externals of conduct, excellent dialogue which carries the plot along. But he does not manage to give these superficial things significance. They remain reproductions instead of interpretations. If all the managers had not been clamoring for Fitch's plays, he might have had time to follow the advice of his friend Maud Adams: to go some place and soak himself in life instead of in atmosphere. His plays had in them, besides this local sense, a distinctive quality which was a part of himself. For he was always original, a self-directing individual instead of a follower of the crowd. From the days when in prep school he calmly but firmly refused to play football on the muddy field in spite of being thrown into the mud puddles by his outraged ''red-blooded'' schoolmates, to the end of his life he knew what he wanted to do, though he did not get time to do it. His artistic sense, his instinct for the novel in the apparently ordinary, his facility of invention, his sympathy, his brilliance, all combined to give his plays a certain flavor which was perhaps, like many flavors, only something to appeal to the taste, and not an indication

[4] *The Drama,* February, 1912.

of the nourishment to be derived from the confection. Yet distinctive flavors are not common enough in the theater to be lightly estimated.

The play which brought Fitch into public notice and managerial favor was *Beau Brummel,* written for Richard Mansfield in 1890. The material for it was taken from a play by Blanchard Jerrold and from *The Life of George Brummel,* which was the source of Jerrold's play. Fitch showed in this work his genius for capturing the atmosphere of a period, his mastery of the technique of the comedy of manners. This is a difficult sort of play to write, because in addition to ability to reproduce atmosphere and write clever dialogue in the idiom of the period the play represents, one must make clear beneath the conversation and costumes the character of the persons of the drama, and reveal the quality of their minds, hearts or souls by dramatic situations. It was said of Bret Harte that he remained a promising young author for forty years. It might have been said of Fitch that he remained a promising young dramatist for nineteen years. His work never reached the maturity of his French contemporaries whom he so admired: Hervieu, Lavedan and Donnay. Fitch's best plays are *The Climbers, The Truth, The Girl with the Green Eyes,* and *The City.*

David Belasco and Augustus Thomas are two dramatists whose work belongs in two centuries, for both, beginning in the 1890s, continued prominent in American dramatic circles well into the third decade of the twentieth century. It seems likely that Time, the final judge and critic, will connect Belasco's name with the theater rather than with the drama, since his work has been rather in the field of production than of writing plays. His autobiography provides a picture of the evolution of the modern drama from the theatricalism of the old-time melodrama to the modern effort to fuse scenery, lighting, subject, and action into one unified projection of a mood, or idea, for in 1873 Belasco gave up the position of manager of the opera house of Virginia City, Nevada, to become the secretary of a star, actor-manager who visited that town to play with the stock company. This actor was Dion Boucicault, who dictated his

Led Astray to his capable assistant, then twenty years of age.

The Belascos were originally Portuguese Jews, driven out of their country in the eighteenth century, and, according to Montrose J. Moses, following the westward course of the pioneers until they reached Vancouver. Here David's father became rich and was elected the mayor of Victoria. In 1849 he joined the gold seekers in California, and David Belasco was born in San Francisco. When the boy was five, the family returned to Victoria where David's education was entrusted to a Catholic priest. The ecclesiastic touch in dress to which Mr. Belasco has always adhered is one lasting memorial of his years in the monastery. Another is his love of solitude.

In 1865 Belasco was back again in San Francisco, where he entered the Lincoln School, remaining there until 1871. Like most prominent men of the theater he came of a family interested in it, his father having played minor parts in London performances. He played children's parts at the age of five, and in his early teens saw a performance of *Hamlet* which so thrilled him that he rushed home to reenact the tragedy, and even tried to write down the dialogue from memory. The material in his *My Life's Story* is confused; so much so, in fact, that some scholars have deduced that he was born in 1859 instead of 1853.

It is certain, however, that he went back to San Francisco with Boucicault and became manager of Maguire's New Theater. Here he met Herne, and also such stars as Edwin Booth, John McCullough, E. A. Sothern, and William Florence. The manager in those days was likely to be called upon to play in the visiting company. Whatever the America drama of that period lacked in the way of plays, it certainly possessed a group of actors whom any modern manager would give anything in reason or unreason to be able to engage, and the training which the visits of these companies provided observant actor-managers like Belasco was far from negligible.

From Maguire's Theater Belasco went to Baldwin's Academy of Music and then to Egyptian Hall, where he wrote, directed and sometimes acted in eight one-act plays.

It was here he began his experiments in stage lighting. He first came to New York through the influence of Daniel Frohman in 1882, succeeding Steele Mackaye at the Madison Square Theater. Here he began his revolution of stage management by producing Howard's *Young Mrs. Winthrop* in a new fashion. This was nothing more nor less than the insistence that the actors play to the rest of the cast instead of to the audience; that they devote their energies to making the meaning of the play effective, instead of to scoring effects with the audience. No longer could the comedian wait for the audience to laugh, or the hero indicate by his eloquent pause where the applause for his emotional hits was due. Mr. Belasco's eye for the fitness of all things was not solely directed to what could be done with the electric switchboard and the scenic artists. Further proof of this is the large number of actors whom he has made famous, such as Mrs. Leslie Carter, Blanche Bates, David Warfield, Frank Keenan and Frances Starr. In collaboration with John Luther Long he turned that author's Japanese sketches into plays which were as appealing to the eyes as to the mind—perhaps more so. *Madame Butterfly,* the first of these, attracted the attention of Puccini, who made it into the familiar opera. *The Darling of the Gods* was more spectacular but less dramatic. *The Girl of the Golden West* was also made into an opera by Puccini. This play was Belasco's own, and for it he drew upon his deep knowledge of that West. The conclusion one draws from reading the plot is that the region must have loomed in the writer's memory as even a wilder West than it seemed to tourists. The heroine is the keeper of a saloon, but is at the same time the embodiment of all the virtues which arouse men's chivalry, besides the more robust ones of courage, loyalty and a resourcefulness that is unbelievable. She falls in love with an outlaw, who is wounded in flight from the sheriff, and whom, of course, she hides in the loft of her saloon. When the sheriff comes looking for him, in the unconvincing fashion of melodramtic sheriffs who overlook the most probable hiding places to oblige the playwright, the girl persuades him to play cards with her, the stake being the lover's freedom. She wins by cheating, but just as the

sheriff is about to leave a drop of blood falls through the boards which make the ceiling of the room, thus betraying the wounded man. In *My Life's Story* Belasco relates that he took this incident from an actual experience of which his father was a witness.

The Rose of the Rancho was another play in which Belasco utilized his keen realization of the artistic possibilities in the western setting and atmosphere. The author of this in its original form was R. W. Tully. In connection with Cecil de Mille he produced The Return of *Peter Grimm,* wherein David Warfield played Peter. *The Auctioneer* and the *Music Master,* by Klein, were written for the same actor, as was also *Van der Decken,* a version of the legend of the "Flying Dutchman." Of this play it might be said that the perfect scenery obscured the drama. The audience's response to the tragedy of the lonely Van der Decken was broken by the pure shock of the ghastly and ghostly storm scene.

Belasco has been responsible for bringing a number of European plays to the American stage, such as Bahr's *The Concert,* Martini's *Laugh, Clown, Laugh,* and Guitry's *The Comedian.*

Augustus Thomas (1859-) began as a reporter, and most of his work reveals either the reporter's style or the reporter's instinct, or perhaps both. His plays have the quality of timeliness, which is essential if a playwright is going to deal with topics of popular interest instead of with matters of human interest. For example, in 1891 the antagonism of the Civil War was a tale of the elders to the rising generation and a memory softened by a quarter of a century even to those who had lived through the conflict. There was a general desire to forget the issues which had divided the sections. So Thomas wrote *Alabama,* which Henry Watterson declared did more to reconcile the North and South in one performance at Louisville than he had been able to achieve in twenty years as an editorial writer.

In Missouri, produced in 1893, did for Thomas' native state something like what *Shore Acres* and *The Old Homestead* were doing at the same period for New England. When the troublous years of 1893-94 made the relations of

capital and politics the common talk, Thomas wrote *The Capitol,* which was, and indeed is, an excellent presentation of the fashion in which politics, finance and religious influence are interwined. *The Earl of Pawtucket* capitalized the aftermath of what might be called the "Anglomania," which had prevailed in America in the late eighties. *The Witching Hour* dealt with telepathy, a subject which always interested Thomas. He kept the play in his desk nine years waiting until there was sufficient popular interest in the subject to make it effective in the theater. *As a Man Thinks* was produced in 1911 when interest in mental healing was general. *The Copperhead,* produced in 1918, owed something of its success to the war mood in which America, like the rest of the world, was living. It is the story of a Union spy whom Lincoln persuaded to pretend he was a Southern sympathizer, a "Copperhead," in Illinois, Lincoln's own state.

It goes without saying that Thomas could not even be a successful playwright if all he had to bring to the stage were a skill in plot construction and a sense of the timely. He adds to these a gift for characterization. If he illustrates Clayton Hamilton's complaint that American playwrights keep their noses glued to newspapers instead of to life, his work shows a steady progress from the reporter toward, if not quite to, the interpreter of the American scene.

Mrs. Roberts (*looking in upon her husband from the door of the library in their apartment at Hotel Beltingham*). Well, you've got rid of him, Edward.

Roberts. Yes, at last, thank Heaven! (*He continues writing at his table, without looking up, as he answers his wife.*) But I thought he never would go, at one time. He isn't a bad kind of fellow, for an Englishman, and if I hadn't been so busy with this paper, I shouldn't have minded his staying. Of course he was nationally English, but personally he was rather nice. Still it was a terrible interruption, just at this moment.

Mrs. Roberts. Why didn't you hint to him, somehow, to go away?

Roberts. Well, I couldn't do that, you know. I really liked him. He was so very amiable.

Mrs. Roberts. Oh, his being amiable is no excuse. You're amiable yourself, Edward—*too* amiable, if anything. I don't call it amiable to take up almost a full hour of your precious time. I should think any one who came in and saw how busy you were, now, would go away if he had a heart of *stone*. No, I can't believe he was truly amiable; and I must really do something to protect you from these constant interruptions. How do you think I'd better do it?

Roberts (*writing*). Do what?

Mrs. Roberts (*sinking into a chair, and folding her hands in her lap*). Protect you from these interruptions.

Roberts (*writing*). Protect *who?*

Mrs. Roberts. You, Edward. My heart bleeds for you, to see you so driven with your work, and then people coming in and sitting down, and talking to you. I must *stop* it."

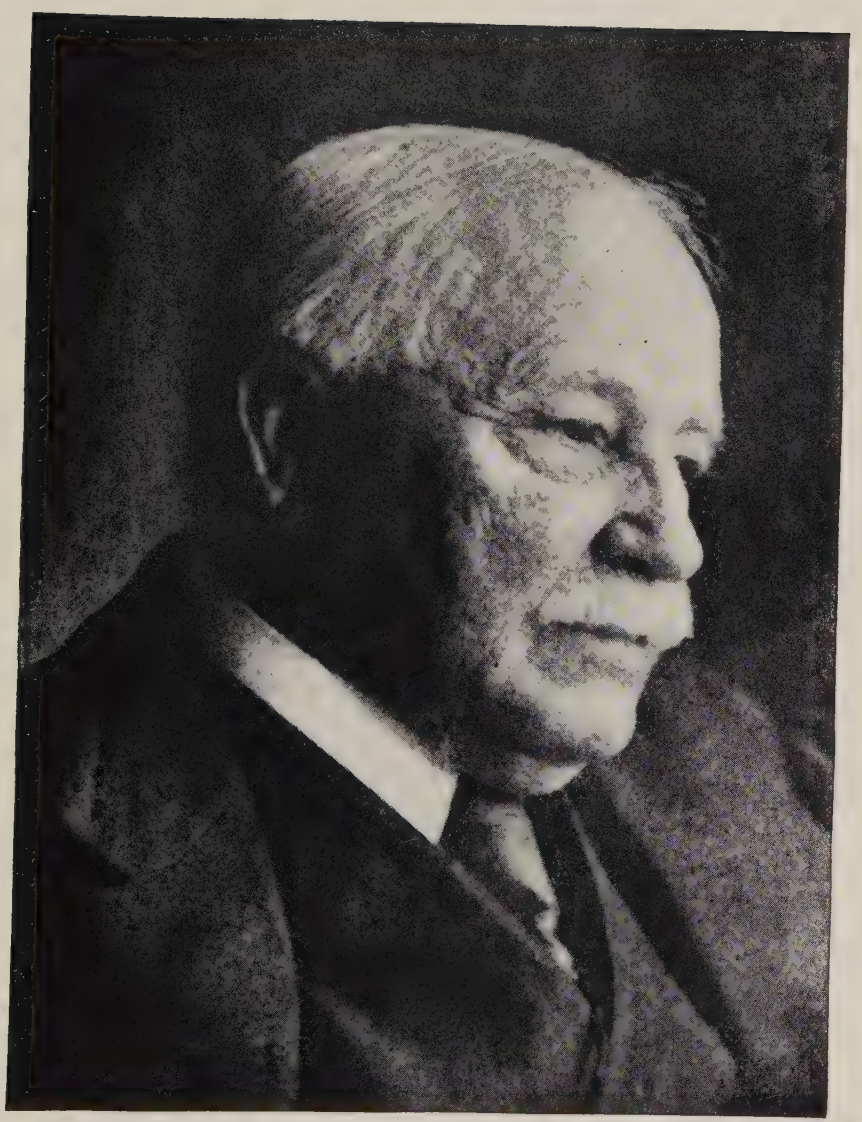
Roberts (*writing*). Oh yes. Stop what?

Mrs. Roberts These perfectly killing interruptions. I should think you would go crazy.

Roberts (*writing*). Who?

Mrs. Roberts. Why you, you poor thing. I think it's worse than cruelty to animals.

Roberts (*writing*). Worse than cruelty to animals. Worse—



William D. Howells

Why, what nonsense is this you've made me write, Agnes? (*He looks up at her in a daze.*) What *do* you want, Agnes? And *do* state it succinctly, my dear!

MRS. ROBERTS. Why, I didn't know but you'd asked him to stay to lunch.

ROBERTS (*writing again*). No; I didn't really feel that I could give the time. I should have liked to do so, and I suppose it was rather shabby not to. It was the least he could have expected. (*He continues writing.*) But I've done the next best thing. I've given him a letter of introduction to Uncle Philip, and he will glut him with all kinds of hospitality when he gets to New York.

MRS. ROBERTS. Yes. (*After a moment.*) Do you think it was quite right, Edward?

ROBERTS (*looking up*). Right? What right?

MRS. ROBERTS. To put him off on your uncle, if you didn't like him yourself?

ROBERTS. But I *did* like him. I liked him as well as it's possible to like any Englishman on short notice. You have to know an Englishman several days before you're sure you like him; but this one was really very pleasant, and I told Uncle Philip he would probably find him so, unless I was greatly deceived. But now, Agnes, you must really let me go on——

MRS. ROBERTS. Surely, Edward, you didn't put that into a letter of introduction?

ROBERTS (*laughing*). That I would have to leave open for him to read? Well, I'm not quite so bad as *that,* Agnes. I wrote a letter to Uncle Philip, to go through the post, and I told him that as soon as he got through the crust of a rather insular manner, and a most unaccountable enthusiasm for Americans, I'd no doubt he'd find my Englishman charming. You couldn't suppose I'd put all that in a letter of introduction?

MRS. ROBERTS. Of course not. But you know you *are* so absent-minded, my dear, and I couldn't help being a little afraid——

ROBERTS. Your fears come too late, my dear. The Englishman is gone, and both the letters with him. Now you *must* let me finish this——

MRS. ROBERTS (*rising to her feet in amazement*). Both the letters with him?

ROBERTS. Yes; I knew he would pass the letter-box on the corner, and I asked him to drop Uncle Philip's letter in it.

MRS. ROBERTS. Wasn't that rather peculiar, Edward?

ROBERTS (*with vexation*). Peculiar? No! What was peculiar about it?

[*The voices, in the anteroom, without, of* Mr. *and* Mrs. Willis Campbell.

He. In the library? Well, we'll just push right in on them.

She. And Mrs. Roberts is there too?

Roberts. Oh, good heavens! Go out, Agnes, and stop them! Take them into the parlor a moment, do, till I get this——

Mrs. Roberts. You know I can't do that, Edward! (*To* Mrs. Campbell, *at the door*). Ah! Come in, Amy! I'm *so* glad to see you. (*The ladies kiss, and* Campbell *follows his wife in.*)

[*Enter* Mr. *and* Mrs. Campbell.

Campbell. And so is Roberts; but he doesn't look it. Hope I don't interrupt you, Roberts, as people say when they know they do.

Roberts (*who has pushed away his writing, and risen to greet the intruders with forced gayety*). How do you do, Amy? No; I was just getting to the end of my morning's work, Willis.

Campbell. Well, it'll do you good to break off before you reach the very tip, then. Keep you from having that tired feeling, you know. What you need is a little dynamite to blast you out of your chair, here, every morning at half past twelve. If you keep on writing close up to lunch, you'll spoil your digestion.

Roberts. Well, I shan't this morning. I've had an Englishman here for the last hour, and I feel as if I could digest almost anything.

Mrs. Campbell. Why, it must have been *your* Englishman, then, whom we met at the corner, as we came here! There, Willis! I told you it was an Englishman!

Campbell. I couldn't believe it: he was so confoundedly agreeable, and he had so much of that English brogue, when he spoke, that I thought he must be a New Yorker.

Mrs. Roberts. Why, how came he to talk with you?

Campbell. Well, he was hanging round a telegraph pole, trying to post a letter in the fire-alarm box. He said he'd been asked to post it by a gentleman who had told him there was a letter-box at the first corner, and the fire-alarm looked like it. I had to take him by the elbow, and steer him across the street to the green box on the lamp post. He didn't seem to like the way it opened its mouth at the top like a dying frog, but he risked his letter in it, anyway.

Mrs. Roberts. There, Edward!

Campbell. Hello! Where does Roberts come in? (Mrs. Roberts *maintains a reproachful silence, and* Campbell *turns to* Roberts). Look here, Roberts, what have you been doing? It

wasn't *you* who gave that poor young Englishman that letter to post?

ROBERTS (*trying to put a bold face upon it*). Nonsense! Certainly I did. I had given him a letter of introduction to Uncle Philip—he thinks he may go on to New York to-night, by the boat—and I asked him to post the letter I wrote to advise Uncle Philip of his coming. That's all.

MRS. ROBERTS. Of course it was all right. But it seemed a little odd when Edward first told me.

CAMPBELL. Did you make your uncle the usual little confidences about the introducee, in your letter of advice?

ROBERTS. I told him I knew he would like him after he had got through his insular manner.

CAMPBELL. And then you got him to post the letter! Well, it *was* something like seething the kid in its mother's milk, Agnes.

MRS. CAMPBELL. What a disgusting idea! Mr. Roberts, don't mind him! He isn't *worth* it. His one idea is to tease.

ROBERTS. I see what you mean, Campbell. But of course he couldn't know what was in it, and it seemed very simple and natural to get him to drop it in the box.

CAMPBELL. It *was* simple, and it was *very* natural. A less absent-minded man's wife might have told him it wasn't exactly delicate, even if the fellow couldn't have known what was in it.

MRS. CAMPBELL. And in *you* it *would* have been indelicate; but with Mr. Roberts it's a very different thing.

CAMPBELL. Oh yes; I know! Absent-mindedness. Well, Roberts, you'll get yourself into an awful mess with your absent-mindedness some day. How do you know he didn't know what was in the letter to your uncle?

ROBERTS (*with some scorn*). Why, simply because I sealed it before I gave it to him.

CAMPBELL. And did you seal the letter of introduction?

ROBERTS. Of course not!

CAMPBELL. Oh, you didn't! Then how do you know that you didn't seal up the letter of introduction, and give him the letter of advice to carry with him?

ROBERTS. Because I *know* I didn't.

CAMPBELL. Or, *that's* no reason! Now be careful. Would you swear you didn't? Suppose you were on the witness stand!

MRS. CAMPBELL. No, don't suppose it, Mr. Roberts. Don't suppose anything of the kind.

CAMPBELL (*without regarding her*). This sort of thing is done every day. People are always getting letters mixed, and shuffling

them into the wrong envelopes. Amy did something of the kind herself down at the Shore last summer and nearly broke off the engagement between young Welling and Miss Greenway. And if she hadn't been the most sensible kind of a girl, Amy *would* have done it, too. And as it was, I had to do some of the tallest lying this side of the Pacific slope. Perfect *sequoias*—made our place, down there, look like the Yosemite Park, when those fables began to tower up.

MRS. CAMPBELL (*faltering*). It's true, Agnes. I told you about it, you remember.

MRS. ROBERTS. Yes, I know. But that doesn't prove that Edward——

CAMPBELL. Oh, doesn't it! If Amy, who has her few wits always about her, could do such a thing, it stands to reason that Roberts, whose multitudinous mind is always off somewhere else when it's wanted, would do it nine times out of ten. Think how absent-minded he is! Remember how he got aboard the sleeping-car that night, and went prying round in all the berths to find you?

MRS. CAMPBELL. Don't be offensive, Willis!

CAMPBELL. I'm simply veracious! And then think how he left his watch in his room, and thought poor old Bemis was a garroter that had taken it from him, and ran after him on the Common, and grabbed Bemis's watch from him, and nearly killed him. And then his going to meet a cook that he'd never seen at the Albany depot, and getting into that scrape with Mrs. McIlheny.

MRS. ROBERTS. That was *my* fault, Willis. I sent him; and I ought to have remembered that he'd never seen the cook.

CAMPBELL. Oh! And what ought Roberts to have remembered? I tell you, he's put that Englishman's letter of introduction into the sealed envelope, and the letter of advice into the open one, beyond the shadow of a doubt.

ROBERTS (*with rising alarm*). Oh, pshaw! You know you don't think so, Willis.

CAMPBELL. Think so? I know it! Where was he sitting?

ROBERTS. Where you are now.

CAMPBELL. In this chair? When you wrote the letters, which did you finish first?

ROBERTS. The letter of introduction, I think.

CAMPBELL. You think! He can't even remember *that!* Well, can you remember which you *gave* him first?

ROBERTS. No, I can't; but it must have been the letter of introduc——

CAMPBELL. Did you put both letters in their envelopes before you gave them to him, or did you hand him first one and then the other?

ROBERTS. I'm sure I can't say! But my impression is——

CAMPBELL (*waving his conjecture scornfully aside*). Agnes, you see how thoroughly mixed up he is.

MRS. CAMPBELL. Yes, and you've *mixed* him up. I declare——

MRS. ROBERTS. Yes, Willis.

CAMPBELL. Oh, very well, then! If I've mixed him up, I'll let him unmix himself. Then he can't complain. If he didn't blunder with the letters, I suppose my merely *asking* him won't create the fact. I didn't make him do it.

MRS. CAMPBELL. And he didn't do it.

CAMPBELL. He ought to know.

MRS. ROBERTS. And you *do* know, don't you, Edward?

ROBERTS. Why, of course. But anything's possible. And now that Willis has suggested it, why, I can't take my oath——

CAMPBELL (*to the ladies*). You see!

ROBERTS. What—what can I do, Willis? The mere supposition of such a thing——

CAMPBELL. Oh, *I* don't know. Go after the Englishman, I suppose, and try to run him down before he reads your letter of advice. (*He bursts into a loud, unfeeling laugh, while* ROBERTS *begins to walk the floor in agitation.*) Can you recall any of the expressions you used? Perhaps they weren't so bad.

ROBERTS (*pausing and rubbing his forehead*). I think I can. I told Uncle Phil not to mind his insular manner; that he was necessarily offensive as an Englishman; but that he seemed to have a great many good qualities, and was quite American in some of his feelings and ideas, and had an enthusiasm for us worthy of a better cause. I said I had only met him once, but I had no doubt he would prove worthy of any kindness that was shown him.

CAMPBELL. Patronizing and insulting to the last degree! Well, you've done it, Roberts!

ROBERTS. I know—I see! But I didn't mean to be offensive. The fact is, I wrote very hastily; I wanted to get rid of him; my mind was half on my article, here——

CAMPBELL. And it was in the same divided condition when you put the letters into their envelopes! What could you expect?

ROBERTS. Look here, Willis! Couldn't *you*——

CAMPBELL. Oh, no! This isn't a thing that *I* can interfere in. If it were a case for ground-and-lofty lying, you might call me in; but where it's principally *tact* that's needed, I'd better leave it to

you, my dear fellow. (*He claps* ROBERTS *on the shoulder, and breaks down in another laugh.*)

MRS. CAMPBELL. Now look here, Willis! This is perfectly outrageous. You haven't the slightest proof in the world that Mr. Roberts has mixed the letters, and it's just your wicked teasing that makes you say he has. If you have any feeling at all, you will stop. *I* think it's gone beyond a joke.

MRS. ROBERTS. And I do, too, Amy. Of course I think Edward was wrong to send the man to his uncle just to get rid of him; but that's no reason Willis should torment him so.

ROBERTS. No, no! There's only too great reason to suppose he's right. Good heavens! What shall I do about it?

CAMPBELL. Well, if I might venture a little suggestion without being denounced as a heartless reprobate——

ROBERTS. I haven't denounced you, Willis!

CAMPBELL. My wife and sister have in your interest, and just when I had thought how to help you out.

MRS. ROBERTS. Oh, how, Willis?

MRS. CAMPBELL. Tell it, instantly, Willis!

CAMPBELL. You'd better look him up at his hotel, and pretend you thought you gave the wrong address on the letter to your uncle.

ROBERTS. That's all very well, but I don't know where he's stopping.

CAMPBELL. Well, that does rather cut the ground from under us. (*A ring at the door is heard.*) Ah, there he is now, coming back to have it out with Roberts. He's read that letter of advice, and he wants to know what it means. We must go, Roberts. I'm sorry to leave you in this fix, but——

[*Enter* BELLA *the maid.*

BELLA (*presenting a card to* ROBERTS). The elevator boy brought it up. The gentleman is waiting below, sir.

ROBERTS (*glancing at the card*). Merciful powers! Willis is right! It is the man himself!

MRS. ROBERTS. Oh, Edward, what do you suppose he wants? But don't be alarmed, dearest! *I* don't agree with Willis in his pessimistic views. I know you can easily explain it.

CAMPBELL. Oh, *can* he? Well, I think I'll just wait, then and hear his explanation.

MRS. CAMPBELL. Willis! You must advise him what to do. You must invent some plan.

CAMPBELL. *Thank* you! I don't deny that I'm pretty ingenious, and all that; but what you want here is the invention of

a Thomas A. Edison. Nothing short of it will ever get Roberts out of *this* scrape.

ROBERTS (*trying to pluck up courage*). But I deny that there *is* any scrape. The whole affair is purely hypothetical. There's nothing in the world to prove that I've mixed up the letters, and I deny that I did. The man has simply come back because he's forgotten something, or wishes to make some little inquiry, or——

CAMPBELL. Then why don't you have him up at once, instead of letting him cool his heels down there in your front hall? Have him up! It's uncivil to keep him waiting.

MRS. ROBERTS. No, no. (*To the* MAID.) Stop, Bella! No, Willis; we must provide for contingencies. I think Edward is perfectly right, and I know he didn't mix the letters up; but oughtn't we to guard against any chances, Willis?

CAMPBELL. I should say you ought. And you'd better ring for a policeman to do it. He's an awfully athletic-looking fellow. Those Englishmen often are.

MRS. ROBERTS. Then, Bella, you must tell the boy to say that Mr. Roberts has just gone out; and that Mrs. Roberts is very sorry——

ROBERTS. No, Agnes, that won't do, my dear. I can't allow that. If I've done this thing, I must face the consequences.

MRS. ROBERTS. Yes, that's what I say. We must provide for contingencies.

CAMPBELL. He may want to fight you, Roberts, like McIlheny, you know, when you asked his wife whether she was a cook.

MRS. CAMPBELL. Everything depends upon what kind of humor he's in, of course.

MRS. ROBERTS. Of course. If he's very—boisterous, you mustn't have anything to say to him; but if he's pleasant, or if he's merely cold, or hurt, in his manner, why, I suppose you must ask him to lunch. And Willis and Amy can stay, and help make it go off.

CAMPBELL. Oh, thank you, Agnes! The Roberts family seems to have a gift for patronizing offensiveness; I don't mind it myself, but if I was an Englishman that Roberts had told to his face that he was nationally detestable——

ROBERTS. Told to his face?

CAMPBELL. It's the same thing—it would take a good deal more than lunch to pacify *me*. I should want *dinner*, and not merely a *family* dinner, a snap-shot, accidental thing, but a regular formal affair, with the best people asked, and the chance of other invitations. The least *you* can do, Roberts, is to send for this Englishman's baggage, and make him stay a fortnight with you.

MRS. ROBERTS. I *had* thought of that, Willis.

CAMPBELL. You *said—lunch.*

MRS. ROBERTS. But our flat is so small, and the children are in the guest-chamber——

CAMPBELL. And in the mean time, the Englishman is waiting below in the select society of the janitor.

MRS. ROBERTS. Oh, my goodness, I forgot all about him!

ROBERTS. Yes. We *must* have him up at once, and then act accordingly.

CAMPBELL. Oh yes; you mustn't give yourself away. If you don't *happen* to have mixed the letters up, you don't want to begin apologizing. You will have to judge from his manner.

ROBERTS. But he was so extremely flattering, so very enthusiastic about us, I'm afraid we can't tell from his manner.

CAMPBELL. You must draw him out, specifically. Did you ask him how he liked America?

ROBERTS. No; I was ashamed to ask him when he told me he had just arrived this morning.

CAMPBELL. Well, then, Amy can ask him. She isn't ashamed to ask anything. And if he begins to abuse us, up hill and down dale——

MRS. CAMPBELL. He had better *not* abuse us! I shouldn't allow it.

MRS. ROBERTS. Oh yes, Amy; bear anything! We *must* try to pacify him somehow.

CAMPBELL. And Roberts had better go out, and meet him in that anteroom of yours— it's as *dark* as a pocket—and make him take off his overcoat—he mustn't allow any refusal—and then kind of linger behind him a moment after you've received him at the door here, and search his overcoat pockets. Very probably he's put the letter into one of them.

MRS. ROBERTS. Do you think that would be very nice, Willis?

CAMPBELL. Well, I don't know: about as nice as having Amy truckle to his abuse of the country.

MRS. CAMPBELL. It isn't at all the same thing.

CAMPBELL. It's exactly the same thing. (*A ring at the door summons* BELLA *away.*) He's getting impatient. Well, I shouldn't like to be kept waiting so long myself.

BELLA (*returning*). It's the gentleman below, ma'am. The boy says he'd like to know if you got his card.

CAMPBELL. I thought so. You must let him come up, or you must send word that you're not at home. You can't prolong the suspense indefinitely.

MRS. CAMPBELL. No, Agnes, you can't, really!

ROBERTS. We must decide, my dear!

MRS. ROBERTS (*desperately*). Well, then, tell the janitor to send him up, Bella! (*As* BELLA *goes.*) And we haven't thought at all how we shall act!

CAMPBELL. Well, I know *one* thing: if Roberts let his knees knock together, *so as to be heard,* I won't stand it. I'll leave the house. It'll be *too* disgraceful. Courage, Roberts! I wouldn't miss seeing how you'll carry this thing off for any money! I know you're a perfect moral hero on all ordinary occasions, but in a predicament like this I don't envy you. And the worst of it is, that if the fellow's a gentleman—and he looked like one, in the English way—you won't be able to judge from his acts how he feels! You'll have to grope your way in the dark, and— There he is! (*A ring is heard.*) Now let's all look unconcerned, as if we were not expecting any one. Amy, you be turning over those photographic views of the White Mountains, in your pretty, careless way. Agnes, you be examining some object with the microscope. Here, Roberts, you sit down to your writing again. And I'll be tuning up the family phonograph. That'll give him an idea of a cultivated Boston family, at home with itself, and at peace with the whole *human* family. And we must all be extremely deferential and—complimentary—so's to take the bad taste of Roberts's letter out of his mouth. (CAMPBELL *delivers these instructions in a rapid whisper. As* BELLA *opens the door to admit the stranger to the anteroom, he continues in a loud, didactic voice.*) As you very justly observed, in our present uncertainty as to whether the peculiar parallel markings of the planet Mars are marine canals, or merely magic-lantern displays of the Martians to attract the attention of the telescope man on Boston Common——

BELLA (*announcing the Englishman at the library door*). Mr. Westgate.

[*Enter* WESTGATE.

WESTGATE (*to* ROBERTS). Ah, I beg your pardon! It's really very ridiculous, and I'm quite ashamed to trouble you again, Mr. Roberts. Your letter——

ROBERTS (*coming eagerly forward*). Oh, I'm so glad to see you again, Mr. Westgate. You're just in time for lunch; and I hope you can sit down with us. Mrs. Roberts, Mr. Westgate. My wife hadn't the pleasure of—ah—meeting you before, I think. Let me take your overcoat. You'll find it very hot in our American houses, I'm afraid.

WESTGATE. Oh, not at all! I'm sure I shall like it. I should *so* like to see one of your furnaces! But I only came back a moment to show you a little mistake—if it *is* a mistake——

MRS. ROBERTS (*eagerly*). I'm so sorry we've only steam heat, and can't show you a furnace; but you'll find it quite hot; and you *must* take off your coat.

WESTGATE. Why, you're very good, I'm sure. But only for a moment.

ROBERTS. Allow me! (*He possesses himself of* WESTGATE'S *hat and coat, and rushes out into the anteroom with them.*)

MRS. ROBERTS. Let me introduce you to my sister, Mrs. Campbell; and my brother, Mr. Campbell, Mr. Westgate. (WESTGATE *bows to the lady, and then shakes hands with* CAMPBELL.)

WESTGATE. Ah! how do you do? I'd no idea—I'm very glad to meet you, I'm sure. I don't know what I should have done with the letter Mr. Roberts intrusted to me——

CAMPBELL. Oh, that was nothing. I saw that you were on the point of doing something desperate, and I just stepped in. There's nothing I like better than saving human life; and as I've often tried to post my wife's letters in the fire-alarm box, at two o'clock in the morning, and never succeeded yet, I had a fellow-feeling for you.

WESTGATE. H'm! Yes! You see your post-boxes are so very different to ours——

MRS. CAMPBELL. Oh, your London post-boxes are simply delightful! They're just *like* posts—fat ones; and they take in whole packages. But—I hope you *like* America, Mr. Westgate!

MRS. ROBERTS. Yes, we are always so glad when your countrymen——

CAMPBELL. We aim to please.

WESTGATE. Well, I can't say I like your post-boxes exactly.

MRS. CAMPBELL. Oh, neither do we!

WESTGATE. And I'd always heard you had clear winter weather. I've never seen it more overcast at home.

MRS. ROBERTS. That is true. It's going to snow, I think. I'm afraid you won't like our snow!

CAMPBELL. Well, perhaps, we might have some with the chill off.

WESTGATE (*regarding him fixedly for a moment*). Ow! Ah! I see! Very good! Ah, ha, ha, ha! Ha, ha, ha! And—ha, ha, ha! Ah, ha, ha!—you meant, *coming home from the club!* I hadn't understood your American humor, at first. I fancy there's no hope

of any good Samaritan to show you to the post-box at two o'clock in the morning hour! Ah, ha, ha!

MRS. ROBERTS. I've been scolding my husband for troubling you with that letter, Mr. Westgate!

WESTGATE. No, really? But I always heard the American ladies were so amiable, you know.

MRS. CAMPBELL. Oh, we *are,* Mr. Westgate! But we have to maintain discipline in the family, you know.

WESTGATE. Of course. But—(*to* CAMPBELL)—what did you mean exactly, by having snow with the chill off? Such a delightful expression.

CAMPBELL. Well, I don't know. Some sort of joke, I suppose.

WESTGATE. I was sure you did! Ah, ha, ha! Your countrymen are so delightfully humorous—so funny, you know. You know we think you're *such* fun.

CAMPBELL. Do you think so? I don't think we're half so funny as Englishmen.

MRS. CAMPBELL. We think you're *twice* as funny as we are, Mr. Westgate.

WESTGATE. Ow, but really, now!

MRS. CAMPBELL. I don't know how we should have done without your Mr. Gilbert.

WESTGATE. But isn't he rather exaggerated? I *much* prefer your Joshua Billings. And your after-dinner speakers! Mr. Depew, for instance!

MRS. ROBERTS. But the Prince of Wales, you know.

WESTGATE. Ow! Do you regard him as a humorist? He says some neat things, occasionally. But your California humor, now: we've nothing like *that,* you know!

MRS. CAMPBELL. I'm afraid you will make my husband intolerably conceited.

WESTGATE. Really? Is Mr.—ah—Campbell a Californian? How very delightful! And is that peculiar dialect used by your California writers spoken in the cities? I should so much like to hear it. I don't think we ever quite get the right accent in reading it.

CAMPBELL. You'd hear it everywhere in California. I'm a little out of practice now, myself; I speak Bostonese, at present; but I recollect very well how the ladies of San Francisco used to say, "Well, I got the dead wood onto you, that time," and "How're you makin' it, pard?" and "You bet," and "You git!" You mean that sort of thing?

WESTGATE. Exactly. How delightful! So very picturesque, you know. So imaginative!

CAMPBELL. Yes, I suppose there's more imagination to the acre in California than you'll find anywhere else in the United States.

MRS. CAMPBELL. And more modesty, Mr. Westgate; more unconscious merit.

CAMPBELL. Well, I shouldn't like to boast before a foreigner. There's Chicago. And for a real, unadulterated diffidence, a shrinking, deprecatory little misgiving as to the existence of the outside universe, I think Mr. Westgate will find that Boston takes the cake. In California people don't *know* they're modest, but in Boston they *do*. That's the difference.

MRS. ROBERTS. I hope Mr. Westgate will stay with us long enough to find out that everything you say is a wicked slander, Willis. Why must you rush off to New York at once, Mr. Westgate?

WESTGATE. You're very good, I'm sure. But I'm afraid—Ha, ha, ha! Ha, ha, ha! (*To* CAMPBELL.) That was a very amusing expression of yours! Imagination to the acre! As if it were some kind of crop! Very good! Capital! Ah, ha, ha! And would yould be kind enough to explain that expression, "take the cake"?

CAMPBELL. Oh, it comes from the cake walk, you know.

WESTGATE. Ow!

CAMPBELL. Yes. Where the darkies try to see which can put on the most style in a kind of walk-round, and there's a cake up for a prize, and the greatest swell takes it.

WESTGATE. How very amusing!

CAMPBELL. Amusing? It's more fun than a goat!

MRS. CAMPBELL. Willis!

WESTGATE. Oh, but really! *Don't* stop him! It's quite what I came to America for—those delightful expressions! I don't know why you're all so shy of using them when you come over! We get them in print, but we seldom hear them.

CAMPBELL. You should go to a ladies' lunch here! You wouldn't hear anything else.

WESTGATE. Ow! And just what is a ladies' lunch?

CAMPBELL. It's the social entertainment of the future. The race is running to girls so, in Massachusetts, that they've got to having these lunches without asking men, so as to see how it will feel when there are no men to ask. Often it's merely a hen feed, where they would like to have men if they could get them; just as a stag dinner is a good time that women would like to come to if they could. Sometimes it's a virtue, sometimes it's a necessity. But it's always a joke.

MRS. ROBERTS. You mustn't believe him, Mr. Westgate. He's

never been at a ladies' lunch, and he doesn't know how charming they are.

WESTGATE. Yes, I understand gentlemen are not asked. But—ah, ha, ha! Ha, ha, ha!—that was a very droll expression of Mr. Campbell's about a goat. More—more amusing than a goat, I think it was. Will you ladies kindly tell me why a goat should be considered so very amusing? You see I'm beginning to be afraid I can't trust Mr. Campbell.

MRS. ROBERTS. I'm afraid you must, in this case. I'm sure we don't know why a goat should be more entertaining than any other animal.

WESTGATE. Ow! Then you're not *all* humorists, over here? We get that idea, you know. We think you're such *jokers*. But really, you know, I think that some people who do that kind of thing, you know, and have Americans a great deal, don't see the point of their jokes at all times; or not *at once*. Your humor is so different to ours, you know. I've often had the meaning of an American joke occur to me some time after, you know, when I've had leisure to think it out. Still, it *is* very amusing.

MRS. CAMPBELL. But *we* think the English humor so refined—so high-bred.

MRS. ROBERTS. Oh yes! Your jokes bear the stamp of such an old civilization, my husband says.

CAMPBELL. So polished with use.

WESTGATE. Ah, well! I don't know about that, you know. There may be something in it. But I'm inclined to think—Ah, ha, ha, ha! Very good! Excellent! I didn't catch your meaning, at first. *Used so often!* I see! Ha, ha, ha! You ought to come over to us, Mr. Campbell. We've a great many charming Americans; but most of them are quite like ourselves.

CAMPBELL. Is it so bad as that?

WESTGATE. Yes; it's really quite vexing, you know. So very tiresome.

MRS. ROBERTS. I hope Mr. Westgate will stay with us long enough to see that we've something besides humor—in Boston, at least. You must let us send to the hotel for your trunk—boxes, I *should* say.

WESTGATE. Ow no! Ow no! I *much* prefer *trunk*.

MRS. CAMPBELL. And *we* prefer *boxes*.

WESTGATE. No, really?

MRS. ROBERTS. You must be our guest long enough at least to see something of Boston. Mr. Roberts will take you to the Art Club Exhibition.

WESTGATE. You're really very good. But I'd really no idea—I only came back a moment on account of a little mistake I think Mr. Roberts made in the let——

MRS. ROBERTS (*hastily*). We think Boston is quite an art centre, now. Amy, I want Mr. Westgate to see the little Monet in the p— drawing-room.

WESTGATE. Oh, *do* say parlor! I think it's so much nicer. And without the *u*, please.

MRS. CAMPBELL. I see you're determined to be pleased with everything American, Mr. Westgate, and I'm sure you'll like this Monet.

WESTGATE. But I beg your pardon! Isn't he French?

CAMPBELL. All the American pictures we buy are by Frenchmen.

MRS. CAMPBELL. But *we* much prefer English pictures, Mr. Westgate. You have so much more technique than the French, so much more *school*. I adore Tadema, myself.

WESTGATE. But—yes—ah—I think he's Dutch, though?

MRS. CAMPBELL. Well, as Mr. Campbell was saying, *our* paintings are all by Frenchmen—all that we buy. If you will come with me, Mr. Westgate——

[*Exit* WESTGATE *and* MRS. CAMPBELL.

MRS. ROBERTS. What in the world has happened to Edward?

CAMPBELL. He can't have been searching the man's coat-pockets all this time. Perhaps he's cut open the lining. Or he's found the wrong letter, and has gone off and hid somewhere. (ROBERTS *shows himself at the door.*) No; there he is now. I didn't know but he'd committed suicide. Well, Roberts! Come in, old fellow! The coast is clear, for the moment! (ROBERTS *advances spectrally into the room.*) What's the matter?

[*They all speak throughout the scene in hoarse whispers, and from time to time the voices of* MRS. CAMPBELL *and* MR. WESTGATE *penetrate to them from the drawing-room.*

ROBERTS. Is he gone?

MRS. ROBERTS. 'Sh! No. He's in the parlor, with Amy. She's showing him the pictures. He couldn't go without his hat and overcoat, you know.

ROBERTS. Yes. I didn't think of that.

CAMPBELL. 'Sh! Have you been through his clothes? 'Sh!

ROBERTS. No; I hadn't the courage.

CAMPBELL. 'Sh! Then where *have* you been? 'Sh!

ROBERTS. Sitting out there in the anteroom.

MRS. ROBERTS. Oh, poor Edward! 'Sh! Did you listen? He still seems very amiable. 'Sh! I don't think he's angry about anything. I don't believe you've made any serious mistake.

CAMPBELL. Unless he's—'sh!—dissembling. They're awfully double-faced fellows, Englishmen are. 'Sh! I think he's dissembling. 'Sh!

MRS. ROBERTS. 'Sh! Nonsense, Willis! He says you made some mistake with the letter; but——

CAMPBELL. 'Sh! Of course you mixed them! He's just lying low. You'd better keep out of his way, Roberts. 'Sh!

WESTGATE (*without*). Then I suppose you've quite a large school of resident artists in Boston?

MRS. CAMPBELL (*without*). Well, no. But we've a very large school of *non*-resident Boston artists. Our painters all have to go to New York to get a living.

WESTGATE (*without*). Ow! Then I suppose New York is the artistic centre of your country?

MRS. CAMPBELL (*without*). Not at all. We have the critics here.

WESTGATE (*without*). Then you consider criticism more essential than painting in an artistic centre?

CAMPBELL. 'Sh! He's getting sarcastic. He's tuning up for you, Roberts. He's tearing off the mask of amiability. Better get out into the anteroom again, Roberts. Agnes can say you were too sick to come to lunch, and we can carry it off somehow. Oh, but—hello! She's asked him to let her send for his boxes—such a delightful expression!—and come and stay with you. I think you'd better be suddenly called out of town. There's no other way for it!

ROBERTS (*with a tremendous effort of moral heroism*). No; I must stay and face it out. It would be cowardly to shirk it.

MRS. ROBERTS. Oh, Edward, what courage you *do* have! But what will you say to him? Willis, *can't* you think of something for Edward to say? You know he's never good on the spur of the moment, and you *are*. 'Sh!

CAMPBELL. 'Sh! Don't say anything at all, till he opens up. But keep treating him beautifully, and then he'll see that Roberts *couldn't* have meant anything by those insulting and patronizing expressions. He'll think it's just our Yankee awkwardness and vulgarity.

MRS. ROBERTS (*willingly accepting the suggestion*). Yes, just our Yankee awkwardness and vulgarity. I know he'll excuse it, Edward. You mustn't be alarmed. Remember how much *real* courage you always have!

ROBERTS. I can't let him excuse it on that ground. No; I must grapple with it frankly.

CAMPBELL. All right! Only let him grapple first. Don't give yourself away.

MRS. ROBERTS. 'Sh! They're coming back. 'Sh!

CAMPBELL. 'Sh! Now, Roberts, brace up. 'Sh! Be a man! Be an American! And deny everything!

[*Enter* WESTGATE *and* MRS. CAMPBELL.

WESTGATE. Your Monet is beautiful, Mrs. Roberts. You know, I think you Americans are so much more open-minded than we are, and you take up with the new things so much sooner. I don't think the impressionists are to the fore with us yet.

MRS. ROBERTS. Oh, but I can't allow you to say anything against England, Mr. Westgate!

MRS. CAMPBELL. No, indeed; you would find no sympathizers in that, Mr. Westgate.

CAMPBELL. We gamble on the mother-country every time, here in Boston, at least, and in New York you'll feel as if you'd just got back to London.

WESTGATE. Well, you know, I should be rather sorry to do that. I came over to see Americans.

CAMPBELL. Well, you're barking up the wrong tree.

WESTGATE. Barking up— What a delightful expression! Would you mind saying—Ah, ha, ha! Ha, ha, ha! Very good! I see! You mean in stripping the bark off for the birch canoes, I suppose. These figurative phrases are so vigorous. And you have so many of them. I've heard Americans use some of them at home. Do you suppose that expression originated with your Indians, perhaps?

CAMPBELL. No; they originated the expression, Good Indians, dead Indians. But if you have a fancy for these expressions, Roberts, here, can fill you up with a lot of them.

ROBERTS. Yes—that is—I do hope you can spend a few days with us before you push on to New York.

WESTGATE. Why, you're very good, I'm sure. But that reminds me of the letter of introduc——

CAMPBELL. You stay on here, and Roberts will paint the town red for you.

MRS. ROBERTS. You must allow us to send for your boxes.

MRS. CAMPBELL. Your luggage—yes.

WESTGATE. Ow, but I'd so much rather you'd say *baggage!* I've had it sent to the railway——

MRS. ROBERTS. Station? That doesn't the least matter.

WESTGATE. Ow, but it does! I'd *so* much rather say *deepo,* as you do.

ROBERTS. We can get it perfectly well, if you'll give us your transfer——

CAMPBELL. Don't say *checks,* Roberts! There must be some *English* word!

WESTGATE. No, really; I must go on to New York. My plans are all made. But on my return from the West I shall be most happy to remember your kindness. I've only ventured to trouble Mr. Roberts in regard to the mistake he seems to have made with——

ROBERTS. I beg you won't suppose——

MRS. ROBERTS (*at the same time*). You mustn't regard it, indeed, Mr. Westgate!

MRS. CAMPBELL (*at the same time*). Mr. Roberts *is* so absent-minded!

CAMPBELL (*at the same time*). Roberts is *all* absence of mind!

WESTGATE. Ha, ha, ha! But you know— Ah, ha, ha, ha! Ha, ha, ha! I see! Capital! Oh, excellent. *English* word for checks! Excellent. Ah—would you be good enough to say just what you mean by painting a place red?

CAMPBELL. Roberts will show you, if you'll only stay!

WESTGATE. It's quite impossible, now, at all events. (*To* ROBERTS.) But the letter you kindly gave me to your uncle——

ROBERTS. Yes—Yes——

MRS. ROBERTS. You'll like Uncle Philip *so* much! And he'll appreciate the favor Edward's done him in sending——

MRS. CAMPBELL (*at the same time*). He's so fond of the English.

CAMPBELL (*at the same time*). And he's right on to Roberts's jokes. They're always at it together. Back and forth, all the time. If Roberts has put up any little job, Uncle Phil will catch on like lightning.

WESTGATE. Oh, what extremely delightful expressions! I'm sure I shan't remember the half of them! But this letter—do you really think—— (*He takes it from his pocket.*)

ROBERTS. Yes—yes. I'm quite certain he'll——

MRS. ROBERTS (*at the same time*). Oh yes, indeed! My husband was with him so much at one time! They're almost of the same age.

WESTGATE. Oh, indeed! I fancied an old gentleman! Then you think that he'll understand——

MRS. CAMPBELL. Uncle Philip understands Mr. Roberts and all his ways perfectly. They have such fun when they're together.

MRS. ROBERTS (*at the same time*). It doesn't matter what Edward has written, he'll take it just in the right way.

CAMPBELL (*at the same time*). Yes, he'll know it's *some* kind of a joke.

WESTGATE. Well, you know, I thought perhaps, myself, it was one of your pieces of American humor.

MRS. ROBERTS. Oh, it *was,* Mr. Westgate, I assure you it was! Just one of our pieces of American humor——

MRS. CAMPBELL. Yes, indeed; you can depend upon that, Mr. Westgate!

WESTGATE. Ah well! If it had been Mr. Campbell, here, I should have felt sure of it. But I couldn't be quite so certain that Mr. Roberts——

CAMPBELL. Oh, when it comes to joking, Americans are all alike. Roberts is a little more alike than the rest of us; that's all. So's Uncle Philip, for that matter. He'd take it right even if Roberts hadn't written anything at all.

WESTGATE. But that's just what Mr. Roberts has done!

ALL THE OTHERS. What!

WESTGATE (*handing the envelope to* ROBERTS, *who finds it empty, and passes it to his wife, who in turn hands it silently to* MRS. CAMPBELL). Of course I wished to read the kind things you'd said of me, as soon as possible, and I was greatly surprised to find no letter in this envelope. I wasn't sure whether you intended me simply to present the envelope to your uncle, or whether— At all events, I decided I'd better come and ask.

CAMPBELL (*who has possessed himself of the envelope*). Why, look here, ROBERTS! You put both letters in that sealed envelope I kept Mr. Westgate from posting in the fire-alarm box.

ROBERTS. Why, so I must! Really, Mr. Westgate, I don't know what to say!

MRS. ROBERTS. Yes, Edward, I don't know what you *will* say!

CAMPBELL. Roberts, you're incorrigible! When *will* you give up this habit of practical joking? Really, old fellow, you ought to stop it. You and Uncle Phil have kept it up long enough. And *I* think you owe Mr. Westgate an apology. The joke's on Uncle Phil, of course; but you ought to see that it's rather embarrassing to Mr. Westgate to find himself the bearer of an empty envelope instead of a letter of introduction. Come, now, *you must explain;* and we'll all apologize for you. (ROBERTS *waits with a foolish face of deprecation turning to horror, at the suggestion of an explanation.*) Come! You owe it to yourself, as a joker.

WESTGATE (*amiably*). Ow, now! Not at all. *No* apologies. I

shouldn't be able to forgive myself if I couldn't allow a man his joke. But I *should* like an explanation, you know. Your humor is so *very* different to ours, and I don't believe any one at home, if I said you had given me an empty envelope to carry to your uncle, *could* feel the spirit of it. And these things are so tiresome, you know, when they happen to fall flat. I hope you won't think me importunate if I say I should like to know just where the laugh comes in on a thing of that kind?

CAMPBELL. Out with it, Roberts!

MRS. ROBERTS. Don't you think— Oh, I'm sure you'll spoil it, Edward!

MRS. CAMPBELL. Don't you think you'd better leave it to Uncle Philip?

CAMPBELL. Well, that's an inspiration, Amy. Leave it to Uncle Phil, Roberts!

ROBERTS (*with a deep sigh of relief*). Yes, that will be best. My Uncle Philip will tell you, if you don't mind.

BELLA (*at the door*). Lunch is served, Mrs. Roberts.

MRS. ROBERTS (*gayly*). I'm going to lead the way, with Mr. Westgate. Edward, bring Amy. And, Willis, you can——

CAMPBELL. Oh, come, now! None of your little unconscious jokes, Agnes! I won't stand it from my own sister.

WESTGATE. Ow! Do the American ladies often make jokes without knowing it, Mrs. Roberts? (*To* CAMPBELL.) But what is just the point of— Ow, I see! Very good! Ha, ha, ha! And shall we have some distinctively American dishes, Mrs. Roberts? You know I'm so very, very curious about your chowder, and doughnuts, and maple syrup, and buckwheat cakes, and corn-dodgers, and hoe-downs. Such delightful names. They really make one's mouth water. (*He goes out with* MRS. ROBERTS.)

CAMPBELL (*lingering, and detaining his wife and* ROBERTS). Roberts, can't you dance a hoe-cake for him? You ought to do it on your knees, you miserable sinner!

THE END.

[*Enter* Beau *from door into bedroom. He enters solwly as though it were too much trouble to come in. He is dressed in a yellow brocaded dressing-gown tied with a heavy yellow cord. It is long, so that only his patent leather pumps with silver buckles show, with just a glimpse of brown and yellow striped socks. He crosses at once to the dressing-table without paying any attention to* Mortimer, *who bows deferentially and says:*

Mortimer. Good morning, sir.

Beau. Oh, go to the devil.

Mortimer (*to himself*). Mr. Brummel is in a bad temper this morning.

Beau (*seating himself at dressing-table*). Mortimer, is the sun shining?

Mortimer (*crossing to window—right*). Oh, finely, sir.

[Simpson *enters, bringing soda-water bottle and glass on a tray.*

Beau (*simply looks at it and motions it away—exit* Simpson). Any gossip, Mortimer? (*Has taken up hand-glass and then gently smooths his eyebrows.*)

Mortimer. None of any account, sir. The Dowager Lady Slopington ran off yesterday with young Philip Pettibone.

Beau (*is now manicuring his nails*). If it happened yesterday, it must be forgotten to-day.

Mortimer. And Captain Badmington shot himself in the park last night, sir, after losing ten thousand pounds at hazard.

Beau (*now takes tweezers and pulls out one or two hairs from his face*). Very stupid of him; he should have shot himself first—is he dead, Mortimer?

Mortimer. No, sir.

Beau. He always was a bad shot. You'll find some of his I.O.U.'s among my papers; return them to him cancelled, with my compliments. He can use them for plasters. And who has called?

Mortimer (*crosses to small table and looks over cards*). Oh, nobody, sir. To be sure there has been the usual crowd of people. The Hon. Mrs. Donner came for your subscription to the town charities, and I gave her all you could spare, sir. Mr. Cecil Serious,

Richard Mansfield as Beau Brummell

the poet, called for permission to inscribe your name under the dedication of his new volume of verses. Lord Cowden came to know if your influence might still be used in the support of his party in the coming elections.

BEAU (*still occupied with his toilet*). Yes, he can use my influence. Well, you satisfied them all, I presume.

MORTIMER (*at left*). I took that liberty, sir. Then there was a quantity of trades people with their bills and accounts. I said you had been out all night with the Prince and really were not able to see them.

BEAU. Pray, Mortimer, be a little careful of my reputation in your lies. You know common people are apt to look upon dissipation very differently from persons of fashion. You may say what you like about the Prince, but handle me a little delicately.

MORTIMER (*bows, then speaks after short pause*). Sprague, the tailor, called again, sir, with his account.

BEAU (*much astonished*). Again! What insolence! Upon what previous occasion had he the presumption to call?

MORTIMER. A year ago last month, sir.

BEAU (*with real astonishment*). What damned impudence! Mortimer, you may let it be known at your club that he comes to me no longer. Send for that new tailor—what's his name—to wait upon me this afternoon. Bring this morning's letters.

[MORTIMER *brings down table with a number of little notes to* BEAU, *who is still seated at dressing-table.*

MORTIMER (*holding up a bundle of bills*). These are bills, sir. All of them fresh this morning and some of them more urgent than usual.

BEAU (*not taking the trouble to look at them*). Hide them away somewhere, where I can't see them, and I shall feel as if they had been paid.

MORTIMER (*pushing forward a bundle of notes*). Your private correspondence, this little collection, sir.

BEAU (*still seated, takes up notes one at a time and smells them*). Patchouli—phew!—Frangipane!—I believe that smells like peppermint. I don't know what that is, but it's very unpleasant. Violet!—musk! Take them all away—you may read them yourself.

MORTIMER (*holding up yellow lock of hair which he has taken from an envelope*). This letter has this little enclosure, sir.

BEAU (*in interested tone*). Money?

MORTIMER. Not exactly, sir, although a similar color.

BEAU (*disappointed—languidly*). Whose is it?

MORTIMER. Lady Constance Conway's, and she says——

BEAU (*interrupts him*). Never mind what she says. I believe I did honor her with the request. Write and thank her and quote some poetry. Say hers is the most precious lock I possess. Rather tender little woman, Lady Constance. (*Sentimentally.*)

MORTIMER (*pointedly*). Is she rich, sir?

BEAU (*sighing*). No, she's not.

MORTIMER (*opening another note*). Oh! A note from Mrs. St. Aubyn. She wants to know where you've been these two days. She says you are her lover's knot; she's coming to see you at three this afternoon, bids you be ready to receive her. She has, besides, down below in a postscript, a myriad of sentiments which she says belongs to you, and she is herself, unalterably yours, Horatia.

BEAU. The one woman in London with whom it's possible to have a Platonic friendship. One must have something nowadays and these other liaisons are so excessively vulgar.

MORTIMER (*very loud as he opens letter*). Mr. Brummel, sir.

BEAU (*shocked*). Mortimer, how often have I told you never to startle me?

MORTIMER (*bows an apology*). Mr. Brummel, sir, here's the memorandum of an I. O. U. for one thousand pounds, given by you to Lord Gainsby at White's three nights ago for sums lost at hazard.

BEAU (*a little disturbed*). The deuce, Mortimer. It must be paid to-day; that's a debt of honor. How can we obtain the money?

MORTIMER. I can try Abrahams again, sir, but he was very difficult the last time.

BEAU (*rings bell. Enter* SIMPSON *from anteroom. Without looking at him*). Simpson!

SIMPSON. Yes, sir.

BEAU. Go to Mr. Abrahams. Of course, you know where he lives.

SIMPSON. Yes, sir. (MORTIMER *brings table back to place up at right.*)

BEAU. Say Mr. Brummel requests his immediate attendance.

SIMPSON. Very well, sir! (*Exit* SIMPSON.)

MORTIMER (*coming down*). Mr. Brummel, sir, this can't go on much longer.

BEAU. No, I hope not.

MORTIMER. Everybody's pressing on you and the only thing that keeps them off at all is your friendship with the Prince, and if anything should happen to that——

BEAU (*quite unaffectedly*). Nothing could happen to that,

Mortimer, and if anything did, I should cut the Prince and make the old King the fashion. (*Rises.*)

MORTIMER. I have been wondering, Mr. Brummel, if I might be so bold, if you had ever thought, sir, of the advisability of a rich marriage.

BEAU. Yes, it has occurred to me occasionally; in fact, it has passed through my mind quite recently that it might be desirable. Only to decide on the person really seems too difficult a task for me to undertake. You would not have me marry a mere money bag, would you, Mortimer?

MORTIMER (*at left of table*). But the great Mr. Brummel has only to choose.

BEAU (*staring at him in utter surprise that such a remark should be necessary*). Yes, of course! But one desires some sentiment. I wouldn't care to make a loan for life and give myself as security.

MORTIMER. Mr. Brummel, sir, have you ever observed Miss Mariana Vincent?

BEAU (*thoughtfully*). Yes, I have noticed her in the Mall and I must confess it was to admire her; her person is perfect. Is her matrimonial figure as good?

MORTIMER. I believe it is sixty thousand pounds, sir.

BEAU. Oh, dear!

MORTIMER (*hastily*). But Mr. Vincent would be ashamed to offer so little to the wife of Mr. Brummel.

BEAU (*musingly*). Yes, it's a very paltry sum, and Mrs. St. Aubyn——

MORTIMER (*insinuatingly*). If you could present her to the Prince, Mr. Brummel, don't you think a Platonic friendship might spring up there?

BEAU (*as though thinking aloud*). She is ambitious, but she is clever, and would never forgive a slight. She is a good hater and if she thought she were being put upon one side, she would make a sly enemy. Well—we shall see. Mortimer, write a letter to Mr. Vincent—make my proposal for his daughter's hand. Be mindful of your language and careful to accomplish it in the most elegant manner, and request an immediate reply.

DRAMATISTS OF THE EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY

Moody and the Romanticists

IN 1990, perhaps in 1950, it will be possible to evaluate the output of early twentieth century drama, but as mankind is almost certain to overlook the absence of qualities which are permanent through preoccupation with what is immediate, it is vain to hope that judgments of contemporaries will be correct. Yet the student can at least train his taste, which is only judgment exerted in deciding what is admirable, by applying the knowledge he has to contemporary productions.

Drama, as has been explained, may have both literary and theatrical values; it must have the latter if it is to be a stage success in its own time, and it must have the former if it is to outlast its stage vogue.

It will be convenient to consider twentieth century American drama in two sections, the World War being the dividing line. In the first quarter of the century more than forty new dramatists had plays produced, and many of the nineteenth century playwrights were still active. Out of this long list it will not be possible or profitable to select more than a few representatives of different tendencies in play-making.

Realism in Europe produced a reaction in favor of romanticism. Naturally the new romanticism was not like the old. It strove for the truth of the realistic united with the idealistic. Hauptmann's *Hannele* and *The Sunken Bell,* Rostand's *Cyrano de Bergerac,* Maeterlinck's *Blue Bird,* Synge's *Deirdre* are dramas which combine utter truth of character portrayal with romantic themes. The first four of these might be termed symbolic plays. However, a good symbolic play, like *Cyrano* or Ibsen's *The Wild Duck,* is perfectly convincing to one who never dreams it has any symbolism. *The Sunken Bell* and some of Maeter-

linck's plays are delightful reading, but too vague in meaning to be effective stage pieces. Similarly, romantic drama of the symbolic sort found exponents in the United States of varying *theatrical* gifts.

The first of the romantic realists was William Vaughn Moody, born at Spencer, Indiana, in 1869. His first play, *The Great Divide,* was produced in 1906, when its author had a ripe literary experience to bring to his work.

Like so many of his countrymen, he secured an education by earning the money for it, beginning by teaching a country school. At Riverside Academy in New York and at Harvard, he paid his way by tutoring, and after taking his master's degree at Harvard, he taught English in that university. In 1895 he became a member of the faculty of the University of Chicago, where he remained until 1903. At that date, in spite of tempting offers from the University, he resigned and devoted himself to an independent literary career. He was partially enabled to do this through the proceeds from a *History of English Literature* which he wrote in collaboration with another Chicago professor. The book has far more the quality of a work of literature than of a text book on literature, and consequently is an ideal guide for the student.

His collected poems and plays fill two large volumes. His poetry, though instinct with emotion, is not for the careless reader. It must be read with one's intellect alert as well as with one's emotions attuned. Before writing his one stage success, *The Great Divide,* he produced the lyrical drama, *The Fire Bringer,* a version of the Prometheus story. *Pandora's Song* from this is almost certain to find a place in every collection of American poetry. Besides its intrinsic beauty, this poem is interesting for the philosophy it embodies.

Of wounds and sore defeat
  I made my battle-stay;
Winged sandals for my feet
  I wove of my delay;
Of weariness and fear
  I made my shouting spear

Of loss and doubt and dread
  And swift oncoming doom
I made a helmet for my head
  And a floating plume.

From the shutting mist of death
And the failure of the breath
I made a battle horn to blow
Across the vales of overthrow.
O hearken, love, the battle horn!
The triumph clear, the silver scorn!
  O hearken where the echoes bring
Down the grey disastrous morn
  Laughter and rallying.

The idea of wresting victory from defeat, good from evil, is worked out in *The Great Divide,* a play which is a study in psychological contrasts of the types produced on the two sides of the Continental Divide.

This drama was originally produced as *The Sabine Woman.* Its exciting, almost sensational first act secured its theatrical success, on its first appearance. Somewhat revised, and renamed *The Great Divide,* it successfully toured the large cities for two years, and continued to be acted in stock until the war.

The plot is as follows:

Ruth Jordan, descendant of a long line of Puritan New Englanders, was keeping house for her brother out in the southwest, where he was trying to retrieve the family fortunes by experiments in fiber production from cactus. A childhood friend is associated with the brother, and is, of course, in love with Ruth. But she does not love him, and never could. The man of her dreams is not the conventional representative of an old order.

Circumstances bring it about that Ruth is left alone at the ranch for a period. Soliloquies are not regarded as marks of high dramatic craft, but Ruth's communion with herself when she is alone is both revelatory of her character, and a fine piece of theatricality. Besides, her conversation with herself is only a continuation of one she was carrying on with Winthrop as the rest of the household were

leaving. She tells him goodbye casually, and then with contrasting rapture looks out over the landscape:

"What a lovely night! Who would ever call this a desert, this moonlit ocean of flowers? What millions of cactus blooms have opened since yesterday!" Winthrop looks at her dubiously and asks, "What's the matter with you tonight?" Ruth replies: "Nothing. Everything. Life! I don't know what's got into me of late, I'm just drunk with happiness the whole time."

While Ruth is singing to herself and talking to the flowers that fill the great bowl on the table three drunken roughs break into the room. When they have wrested knife and pistol from her, they begin to throw dice to see who shall have her. Ruth turns to the best of the three and tells him that if he will save her from the others she will pay him with all she is or can be. Stephen Ghent then pays the Mexican half-breed to clear out and fights it out with the other man. By this time he is sober enough to have recovered his innate decency, and he deliberately leaves his revolver where Ruth can shoot him, turning his back to her meantime, while she is writing a note to her brother explaining that she has gone away to be married.

GHENT. Why don't you shoot? *(He turns round deliberately.)* You promised on the square, but there's nothing square about this deal. Read what you've written. (RUTH, *about to read, snatches up the pistol again, rises, and stands trembling and irresolute.)*
You ought to shoot me like a rattlesnake!

RUTH. I know that.

GHENT. Then why don't you?

RUTH *(slowly)*. I don't know.

GHENT. I guess you've got nerve enough for that or anything. Answer me; why not?

RUTH. I don't—know. You laid it there for me. And—you have no right to die.

GHENT. How's that?

RUTH. You must live—to pay for having spoiled your life.

GHENT. Do you think it is spoiled?

RUTH. Yes.

GHENT. And how about your life?

RUTH. I tried to do it.

GHENT. To do what?

RUTH. To take my life. I ought to die. I have a right to die. But I cannot. I cannot! I love my life, I must live. In torment, in darkness—it doesn't matter. I want my life. I will have it!

Ghent, thoroughly sobered now, first says he will go away and make something of himself, if Ruth will only hold to her promise. His plan is to come back and claim her when he has redeemed his spoiled life. "You never could come back," Ruth says, and that arouses his stubbornness. He insists upon her coming with him as she promised.

With the "big scene" in the first act, the remainder of the play is necessarily something of an anti-climax theatrically. It deals with Ruth's fight to pay the debt she owes her conscience, and her pride. All her traditions and her standards demanded that she should die rather than live at the price she paid. Her New England conscience fought with especial bitterness against the love that grew up in her for Ghent. She learned to make Indian baskets, sold them to the tourists and not only supported herself, but paid back the Mexican the money Ghent had bought him off with. Her husband's mining claim made them rich, but Ruth refused to touch the money. If Ghent had felt any conviction of sin for the sordid beginning of their life together, Ruth would have been more easy in her mind. But he, being one to whom the past was dead, devoted all his thoughts as well as all his energies to making the most of the present and the future. When Ruth, realizing that he is never going to share her remorseful penitence, tells him that she must leave him because there is another life to think of, Ghent tells her she is his now more than ever.

RUTH. But—*how* yours? Oh, remember, have pity! *How* yours?

GHENT. No matter how! Bought, if you like, but mine! Mine by blind chance and the hell in man's veins, if you like! Mine by almighty Nature, whether you like it or not!

RUTH. Nature! Almighty Nature! . . . Not yours! By everything my people have held sacred!

Not yours! Not yours!

The clash of tradition and nature results in this episode in the temporary triumph of tradition, for Ruth goes back

to New England with her brother, who hasn't made a go of his cactus fiber project. The last act takes place in the little New England town, specifically in Mrs. Jordan's sitting room, where portraits of eighteenth-century preachers and Revolutionary soldiers in uniform look down upon the remains of former elegance. Hither comes Ghent to present Ruth's brother with the cactus fiber plant which he had bought for a song and turned into a paying business. Also he bought back the old Jordan place which was about to fall into the hands of mortgage holders, and presented it to Mrs. Jordan. Naturally, Mrs. Jordan feels that Ruth is wrong not to stay with such a husband, especially as he was so delighted with the baby. Ruth, stung to a remembrance of how Ghent had bought her by her mother's plea that she go back to her husband on account of the things he has done for the family, finally bursts out with the truth of their meeting—something over which her brother, his wife and, of course, Winthrop have been puzzling all the years. Mrs. Jordan's comment is: "You ought to have—died—first." Naturally, the upshot of this revelation is that Philip Jordan attempts to kill Ghent, whereat Ruth informs the family that it is exclusively her affair.

In the interview which follows, Ghent makes her see his point; that his meeting with her was a new birth to him, and that the business of life is not mourning over the past, but making the most of being alive. But he also sees the point of view of her family, though he says he cannot understand it. What he does understand is that she belongs in New England, and he beyond the Great Divide. But Ruth has had a moment of clear vision, too, and she tells him what she has seen in that moment, and much that he has never imagined. After seeing her family he understands that she could only regard their life with bitterness, but what he was unprepared to hear was that when Ruth "tore down with bleeding fingers" the life he was trying to build for them, it was only because she loved him.

"Another woman would have gone straight to her goal. You might have found such a woman, but instead you found me, a woman in whose ears rang night and day the cry of an angry Heaven to us both—'Cleanse yourselves!' And I

went about doing it the only way I knew (she points to the portraits on the wall)—the only way my fathers knew—by wretchedness, by self-torture, by trying to pierce your careless heart with pain.

"You have taken the good out of our life and grown strong. I have taken the evil and grown weak, weak unto death. Teach me to live as you do."

Moody lived but four years after this one successful play. *The Faith Healer* was a stage failure and he died the year following its try-out.

Another one-play author is Josephine Preston Peabody (Mrs. Lionel Marks), whose *The Piper* won the prize offered by the theater association of Stratford on Avon in England, and was first presented in the Shakespeare Memorial Theater in 1910. Later Winthrop Ames produced it in New York. It is a symbolic play in which the old story of the Pied Piper of Hamelin is retold in blank verse. It is poetic, spectacular, appealing, and in fact almost anything a play should be except dramatic. The genius of Maeterlinck could hardly surmount that handicap of absence of plot, nor has any dramatist yet achieved that. The adjective "medieval" has been applied to this work, and it is an excellent one. For not only does the play produce the medieval atmosphere of mysticism, and fairy tale, but it has the beauty of elaborate ornament instead of carefully proportioned structure. Aristotle's rule that a play must have a beginning, a middle and an end, all vitally related, still holds after more than two milleniums.

However, this work and others by the same author are delightful reading. Her studies at Radcliffe, from which she was graduated in 1896, were chiefly in the Elizabethan dramatists. From 1901 to 1903 she was instructor in English at Wellesley College. During that period she produced *Marlowe,* a story of the great dramatist's love for a woman who was temporarily infatuated with him, but who realized that her love belonged to a serenely steadfast friend of her childhood, instead of to the brilliant and stormy poet.

Critics have regretted that the taste of the twentieth century did not encourage promising authors to do more than

pioneer in the field of poetic drama. Four years after *The Piper,* Mrs. Marks wrote another medieval play, *The Wolf of Gubbio.* Since that time all her literary work has been lyric rather than dramatic.

Still another symbolist was Percy MacKaye, son of Steele MacKaye, the great experimenter in the theater of the United States. One might say that he has done everything except produce a successful play. Strangely enough for one of his inheritance, he lacks a sense of what is theatrical. He has the highest ideals of drama, and his knowledge of it is extensive. His taste is admirable and his literary gifts far above the ordinary. Barret Clark says that his *The Scarecrow* just misses being a masterpiece. Though produced with careful attention to detail and delightful incidental music, it was not a theatrical success.

His *Canterbury Pilgrims* is a charming entertainment, in which Chaucer's delightful company are made to tell one story not included in the original collection. Mackaye was able to preserve the Chaucerian atmosphere without Chaucerian language.

Although Percy MacKaye is not a successful playwright, he is none the less an influential figure in American drama. From the time of his graduation from Harvard when he wrote his thesis on the need of a better understanding of what constitutes fine drama, he has not ceased to work for the improvement of public taste. He has been particularly interested in community drama, and some of his most notable work has been in the field of the pageant. His *Bird Masque, St. Louis,* and *Caliban* were produced when the pageant was something of a fad, but their merits are not limited to the era of their popularity.

The Realists

"The happy ending" is one of the most attractive of theatrical tricks. Everybody would like to believe in fairy tales, but life and science do not permit it. However, fiction, whether in the novel or the drama, has managed to turn the eyes of all except a few persistent thinkers away from the scientific attitude. While no one could be persuaded to believe that singing a song, or rescuing a child from some peril, would make golden apples grow on an ordinary tree, people find it perfectly easy to believe that the natural laws of character formation may be made inoperative by some such process. Nor are they entirely wrong. Character, unlike trees, has emotional sources as well as physical bases. The habit-patterns shaped by the habitual stimulation of one set of emotions may lose their form if some shock robs those old emotions of their power. But there must be something in which the new impulse can take root; a point which romanticists forget.

Besides the happy endings which come from change of character, there are others of the fairy tale sort which result from interference with the logic of events. Here dramatists have a freer hand. Stage folk are always leaving letters about where no sane person off the stage would think of placing them. There is the letter Iris wrote to Trenwith, for example. Also they are given to telling things to people to whom it would be unnatural for them to confide anything; and sometimes they refrain from making the most obvious explanations. For example, in *The Devil's Disciple,* one has the impression that Mr. Shaw has worked very hard to keep the minister's wife from telling her husband what happened. Such departures from the natural may be employed to bring about pleasant endings, as well as unpleasant ones.

Early in the twentieth century there was a kind of revolt against the happy ending. One of the first playwrights to produce a drama which set forth the relentless logic of character was Eugene Walter, whose *The Easiest Way,* performed in 1908, was hailed as the work of that long-sought person, the real American dramatist.

Later works of Walter's did not reach the standard of this one. His *Paid in Full,* produced two years earlier than *The Easiest Way,* was a popular success. He is a born man of the theater and has an unerring instinct for the theatrically effective scene.

It was the good fortune of Edward Sheldon to interest the Fiskes in his first play, *Salvation Nell.* This happened in 1908, the year after he was graduated from Harvard at the age of twenty-one. For a twenty-two-year old to write a work which was produced by an actress and a manager of such standards as Minnie Maddern Fiske and Harrison Grey Fiske was something of an achievement. The work interested these two artists of the theater not because it was a perfect, or even an excellent piece of craftsmanship. It was not. But it was a play which had sincerity, minute observation and a certain power. In 1912 he wrote another play, *The High Road,* which Mrs. Fiske also produced. The truthfulness of *Salvation Nell* was quite absent from *The Boss.* It had a manufactured happy ending of an improbable situation. A girl of the finest traditions of culture and highest ideals of conduct married a corrupt politician to keep him from closing a savings bank in which scores of poor people in whom she was interested had their money. Her family's business was also saved by her marriage to this Reagan, whose sudden change of heart at the end is not as incredible as Emily's.

Sheldon's best play is *Romance,* first performed in 1913. It had a long and deserved popularity with Doris Kean as the star. Its form is one which has attracted many dramatists; that of a play within a play. A young man comes to tell his grandfather that he is going to marry an actress, and when the older man warns him that the union of people who live by different standards and different traditions is generally unwise, the boy of course says that his grandfather could not possibly understand. But he could; for he had been in love with an opera singer; and then the scene shifts to the days of the old man's young manhood, and there is enacted the story of his romance; of the woman's sacrifice of her love for him to her ideal of him.

The workmanship of this really charming play is

uneven. One is just well into the sentiment of a scene when the author indulges in sentimentality. Sometimes, too, he evades the issue of some crisis by bringing in something accidental. It was, apparently, not so much respect for Rita's ideal of him as the emotion produced by some passing singers which induced the rector to refrain from adding himself to the list of her lovers.

There are several women in the United States who write plays, though to date no one has claimed, even in the press notices, or the theater advertisements, that any of them has produced a great play, or even a near-great one. Still there are not many dramatists of the century whose work has any promise of permanence, so one cannot attribute this lack of greatness to some peculiarly feminine trait. However, most of our women dramatists are rather conventional both in style and in the themes they select.

Rachel Crothers writes smoothly and interestingly. Her dialogue is neither too colloquial nor too literary. As she writes about matters of general though not burning interest, the result is that one is pleasantly entertained at the performance of her plays, which, it should be noted in passing, she sometimes directs, or acts in.

Her best known works are *A Man's World* (1915), *The Three of Us* (1916), *The Herfords* (1917), from which a selection was quoted in a previous chapter, and *Nice People,* a picture of the younger generation and its new standards.

Zoe Akins, born in Missouri in 1886, essays rather more serious studies of contemporary society. Her first play, *Papa,* appeared in 1919, though it was written earlier. The same year saw the staging of her *Déclassé.* Two years later *Daddy's Gone a Hunting* was a popular success.

Susan Glaspell (Mrs. George Cram Cook) is an Iowan, who began her literary career as a newspaper writer. She became associated with the Provincetown Players, and in collaboration with her husband produced in 1915 one of the most popular one-act plays in the country's repertoire—*Suppressed Desires.* It owed considerable of its vogue to the interest in psychology just then becoming matter for popular discussion instead of material for the scientist's laboratory, but it had other merits than timeliness. Her

play, *Trifles,* written in 1916, is a more serious piece of work. These two with half a dozen others were issued in a volume in 1920.

Alice Brown, born in 1857, was an accomplished short story writer and a novelist for years before she became a playwright. In 1915 she won the Winthrop Ames prize of $10,000 for her play, *Children of Earth.* In spite of the merits of this play and of her one-act dramas, her genius is more for the short story than for the theater.

Zona Gale is another prize winner in the dramatic field, who is more at home in the novel and the short story than in the medium of the drama. Her *Miss Lulu Bett,* which won the Pulitzer Prize for 1920, is her only play.

Mary Austin's *Arrow Maker,* produced in 1911, is deserving of attention for the first-hand knowledge of Indian lore and customs which the author has embodied in it as well as for its literary merit. It is not, however, a serious contribution to the drama of the theater.

If consummate knowledge of the theater and of what will go over the footlights would make a dramatist, George M. Cohan would deserve a place in the front rank of twentieth century group. But though entertaining, Mr. Cohan's plays are hardly interesting. He is a showman of genius, but a dramatist is something different.

Comedy of Manners

Langdon Mitchell (born in 1875) enjoys the distinction of having written what the critics pronounce the only genuine American comedy of manners. There are many reasons why the drama of our country should be poor in this sort of play. Perhaps the chief one is that it is hard to write a comedy of manners in a society which has no generally accepted traditions and standards. Moody's best play is based on the contrast of those very things in different sections, and there has been a vast amount of fiction written on the same theme. It is a trite saying that New York does not represent the United States in ideas and ideals, but as the largest city of the land, and the theatrical capital it looms large in literature, particularly the literature of the stage.

Mitchell, with artistic instinct, or perhaps with philosophic insight, built his most famous comedy upon a flaw in American character which may fairly be called national, since it is characteristic of every element in our heterogeneous population except some descendants of the Puritans. The author's name for this fault is frivolity, and that is the aspect of it which appears in his play. But its source is a kind of superficiality, born chiefly out of the conditions under which our social system has developed. Life has been very simple and rather easy for this nation, as a whole. When one recalls the blood which has soaked practically every foot of European soil, horrors of famine and pestilence which have swept it over and over, and hideous persecutions and ineffable heroisms which have gone into the forging of every national character over there, it becomes a little clearer why we have not done more hard thinking, and have not more settled values in the immaterial.

Another play by Mitchell, *The New Marriage,* is likewise a satire on New York's most noted social set, but it is not so good a work. His dramatization of Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* into the play, *Becky Sharp,* provided Mrs. Fiske with one of her most popular rôles. It was for this same actress that he wrote *The New York Idea* and *The New Marriage.*

From The New York Idea

Of this work the author said: "When I was writing this play I had really no idea of satirizing divorce, or a law, or anything specially temperamental or local. What I wanted to satirize was a certain extreme frivolity in the American spirit and our American life—frivolity in the deep sense—not just a girl's frivolity, but that profound, sterile, amazing frivolity which one observes and meets in our churches, in our political life, in literature, in music. . . . Our frivolity is, I feel, on the edge of the tragic, and there are lines, comedy lines, in *The New York Idea* that indicate this aspect of the thing."[1]

The plot sounds farcical. Philip Phillimore, a New York judge, has been divorced from his wife, Vida Phillimore, and is about to marry Cynthia Karslake, who has divorced her husband, though there seems some question whether the decree will be sustained. On the day of the wedding, Cynthia, who is a devoted follower of sport, goes to call on Vida Phillimore, her prospective husband's former wife. There she meets her former husband, John Karslake, and Sir Wilfrid Cates-Darby, "a high-bred sporting Englishman." He persuades Cynthia, whom he had met the day before at the Phillimore home, to go to the races with him that afternoon, though she was to be married at three. She sent a telegram asking that the ceremony be postponed until eight. The automobile was stalled and she did not get back until ten, and then she refused to go on with the wedding. She thought that John Karslake was going to marry Vida Phillimore and her suspicion was confirmed when those two, who had come uninvited to her wedding, left together "on important business." She went to Karslake's home to make them uncomfortable, as they had come to her projected wedding. But Vida married the Englishman, and John revealed to Cynthia that the divorce decree was not valid, so she could not marry Philip. As they were both still in love with each other, though unable to get along without quarreling, the ending is "happy."

The frivolity is revealed in the attitude of all the characters. Never is there any question of anything deeper than

conventions or whims. Moral values, and genuine feeling scarcely come into consideration at all.

The play opens in Philip Phillimore's living room the day before his marriage to Cynthia Karslake is to take place. In anticipation of the morrow's ceremony, Mrs. Phillimore, his mother, his sister, Miss Henage, his aunt, and William Sudley, his cousin, are all assembled for tea, and discussing the approaching nuptials as well as the past history of the couple. Grace Phillimore has just welcomed cousin William Sudley, and asked about the climate of Cairo.

SUDLEY. We left Cairo six weeks ago, so I've had no news since you wrote in February that Philip was engaged. *(Pause.)* I need not say I consider Philip's engagement excessively regrettable. He is a judge upon the Supreme Court bench with a divorced wife—and such a divorced wife.

GRACE. Oh, but Philip has succeeded in keeping everything as quiet as possible.

SUDLEY *(acidly)*. No, my dear! He has not succeeded in keeping his former wife as quiet as possible. We had not been in Cairo a week when who should turn up but Vida Phillimore. She went everywhere and did everything no woman should.

GRACE *(unfeignedly interested)*. Oh, what did she do?

SUDLEY. She "did" Cleopatra at the tableaux at Lord Errington's! She "did" Cleopatra, and did it robed only in some diaphanous material of a nature so transparent that—in fact she appeared to be draped in moonshine. (MISS HENAGE *indicates the presence of* GRACE. *She rises.)* That was only a beginning. As soon as she heard of Philip's engagement, she gave a dinner in honor of it! Only divorcés were asked! And she had a dummy—yes, my dear, a dummy—at the head of the table. He stood for Philip—that is, he sat for Philip!

Sudley is expressing his opinion of Cynthia's sort as she comes in. "The uncouth modern young woman, eight feet high, with a skin like a rhinoceros and manners like a cave-dweller—an habitué of the race track and the divorce court." Cynthia, instead, is small, high bred, elegantly dressed, but "with the elegance of a woman whose chief interests lie out of doors. There is nothing horsey in her style and her expression is youthful and ingenuous."

The family tea-party is unexpectedly increased by Vida

Mrs. Fiske as Cynthia Karslake in "The New York Idea"

Phillimore, who has come, ostensibly to ask about some stock she still owns jointly with her former husband, but really to see Cynthia. "I feel most cordially towards you," she assures her successor, "and, really, you know, people in our position should be on cordial terms." To which Cynthia replies: "Naturally. If people in our position couldn't meet, New York society would soon come to an end."

Just at this point John Karslake is announced. He has come to get Phillimore's signature on some business paper. Karslake is "a powerful, generous personality, a man of affairs, breezy, gay and careless. He gives the impression of being game for any fate in store for him. His clothes indicate sporting propensities and his taste in waistcoats and ties is brilliant" Later, Sir Wilfrid comes in. He has a letter of introduction to Philip. Karslake has known him before, as both men own racing stables. The stage direction states that Sir Wilfrid's manner, dress and diction are the perfection of English elegance; his movements quick and graceful. He talks lightly and with ease. He is full of life and unsmiling good-temper.

PHILIP *(to* SIR WILFRID *and referring to the letter of introduction in his hand).* I am Mr. Phillimore. I am grateful to Stanhope for giving me the opportunity of knowing you, Sir Wilfrid. I fear you find it warm?

SIR WILFRID *(delicately mopping his forehead).* Ah, well—ah—warm—no—hot, yes. Deuced extraordinary climate yours, you know, Mr. Phillimore.

PHILIP *(conventional).* Permit me to present you to—*(The unconventional situation pulls him up short. It takes him a moment to decide how to meet it. He makes up his mind to pretend that everything is as usual, and presents* CYNTHIA *first)* Mrs. Karslake.

[SIR WILFRID *bows, surprised and doubtful.*]

CYNTHIA. How do you do?

PHILIP. And to Mrs. Phillimore. *(*VIDA *bows nonchalantly, but with a view to catching* SIR WILFRID'S *attention.* SIR WILFRID *bows and looks from her to* PHILIP.) My brother—and Mr. Karslake, you know.

SIR WILFRID. How do you do, my boy? *(Half aside to John.)* No idea you had such a charming little wife—What?—Eh. *(*KARSLAKE *goes up to speak to* PHILIP *in the further room.)*

CYNTHIA. You'll have a cup of tea, Sir Wilfrid?

SIR WILFRID *(at table).* Thanks awfully. *(Very cheerfully).* I'd no idea old John had a wife! The rascal never told me!

CYNTHIA *(pouring tea and facing facts).* I'm not Mr. Karslake's wife!

SIR WILFRID. Oh!—Eh?—I see——*(Business of thinking it out.)*

VIDA *(who has been ready for some time to speak to him).* Sir Wilfrid, I'm sure no one has asked you how you like our country?

SIR WILFRID *(going to* VIDA *and speaking, standing by her at the sofa).* O, well, as to climate and horses, I say nothing. But I like your American humor. I'm acquiring it for home purposes.

VIDA *(getting down to love as a business of conversation).* Aren't you going to acquire an American girl for home purposes?

SIR WILFRID. The more narrowly I look the agreeable project in the face, the more I like it. Oughtn't to say that in the presence of your husband. *(He casts a look at* PHILIP *in the next room.)*

VIDA *(cheerful but unconstrained).* He's not my husband.

SIR WILFRID *(completely confused).* Oh—eh?—my brain must be boiled. You are—Mrs.——eh—ah—of course, now I see! I got the wrong names! I thought you were Mrs. Phillimore. *(He sits by her.)* And that nice girl, Mrs. Karslake! You're deuced lucky to be Mrs. Karslake. John's a prime sort. I say, have you and he got any kids? How many?

VIDA *(horrified at being suspected of maternity, but speaking very sweetly).* He's not my husband.

SIR WILFRID *(his good spirits all gone, but determined to clear things up).* Phew! Awfully hot in here. Who the deuce is John's wife?

VIDA. He hasn't any.

SIR WILFRID. Who's Phillimore's wife?

VIDA. He hasn't any.

SIR WILFRID. Thanks fearfully. *(To* MATTHEW PHILLIMORE, *whom he approaches; suspecting himself of having lost his wits.)* Would you excuse me, my dear and Reverend Sir—you're a church man and all that—would you mind straightening me out?

MATTHEW *(most gracious).* Certainly, Sir Wilfrid. Is it a matter of doctrine?

SIR WILFRID. O damme—beg your pardon—no, it's not words, it's women.

MATTHEW *(ready to be outraged).* Women!

SIR WILFRID. It's a divorce. Now, the lady on the sofa——

MATTHEW. *Was* my brother's wife; he divorced her—incompatibility—Rhode Island. The lady at the tea-table *was* Mr. Karslake's wife; she divorced him—desertion—Sioux Falls. One moment—she is about to marry my brother.

SIR WILFRID. I'm out! Thought I never would be! Thanks! (VIDA *laughs.)*

VIDA *(not a whit discountenanced and ready to please).* Have you got me straightened out yet?

SIR WILFRID. Straight as a die! I say, you had lots of fun, didn't you? *(Going back to sofa.)* And so she's Mrs. John Karslake?

VIDA *(calm, but secretly disappointed).* Do you like her?

SIR WILFRID. My word!

VIDA *(fully expecting personal flattery).* Eh?

SIR WILFRID. She's a box o' ginger!

VIDA. You haven't seen many American women!

SIR WILFRID. Oh, haven't I?

VIDA. If you'll pay me a visit tomorrow at twelve, you shall meet a most charming young woman who has seen you once, and who admires you—ah?

SIR WILFRID. I'm there—what?

VIDA. Seven seventy-one Fifth Avenue.

SIR WILFRID. Seven seventy-one, Fifth Avenue, at twelve.

VIDA. At twelve.

SIR WILFRID. Thanks. *(Indicating Cynthia.)* She's a thoroughbred—you can see that with one eye shut. Twelve. *(Shaking hands.)* Awfully good of you to ask me. *(He joins* JOHN.) I say, my boy, your former's an absolute certainty. *(To* CYNTHIA). I hear you're about to marry Mr. Phillimore, Mrs. Karslake?

(KARSLAKE *crosses to* VIDA. *They both go to the sofa, where they sit.)*

CYNTHIA. Tomorrow, at 3 P. M., Sir Wilfrid.

SIR WILFRID *(much taken with* CYNTHIA, *he addresses her).* Afraid I've run into a sort of family party, eh? *(indicating* VIDA). The Past and the Future—awfully chic way you Americans have of asking your divorced husbands and wives to drop in, you know—celebrate a christenin', or the new bride, or——

CYNTHIA. Do you like your tea strong?

SIR WILFRID. Middlin'.

CYNTHIA. Sugar?

SIR WILFRID. One!

CYNTHIA. Lemon?

SIR WILFRID. Just torture a lemon over it. *(He makes a ges-*

ture of twisting a lemon peel. She gives tea.) Thanks. So you do it tomorrow at three?

CYNTHIA. At three, Sir Wilfrid.

SIR WILFRID. Sorry!

CYNTHIA. Why are you sorry?

SIR WILFRID. Hate to see a pretty woman married. Might marry her myself.

CYNTHIA. Oh, but I'm sure you don't admire American women.

SIR WILFRID. Admire you, Mrs. Karslake——

CYNTHIA. Not enough to marry me, I hope.

SIR WILFRID. Marry you in a minute! Say the word. Marry you now—here.

CYNTHIA. You don't think you ought to know me a little before——

SIR WILFRID. Know you? Do know you.

(CYNTHIA *covers her hair with her handkerchief.)*

CYNTHIA. What color is my hair?

SIR WILFRID. Pshaw!

CYNTHIA. You see! You don't know whether I'm a chestnut or a strawberry roan! In the States we think a few months of friendship is quite necessary.

SIR WILFRID. Few months of moonshine! Never was a friend to a woman—thank God—in all my life.

CYNTHIA. Oh—oh, oh!

SIR WILFRID. Might as well talk about being a friend to a whiskey and soda.

CYNTHIA. A woman has a soul, Sir Wilfrid.

SIR WILFRID. Well, good whiskey has spirits—dozens o' souls.

CYNTHIA. You are so gross!

SIR WILFRID *(changing his seat to above table).* Gross? Not a bit! Friendship between sexes is all fudge! I'm no friend to a rose in my garden. I don't call it friendship—eh—eh—a warm, starry night, moonbeams and ilex trees, "and a spirit who knows how," and all that—eh—*(getting closer to her).* You make me feel awfully poetical, you know—(PHILIP *comes down, glances nervously at* CYNTHIA *and* SIR WILFRID, *and walks up again).* What's the matter? But, I say, poetry aside—do you, eh—*(Looking around to place* PHILIP). Does he—y'know—is he—does he go to the head?

CYNTHIA. Sir Wilfrid, Mr. Phillimore, is my sober second choice.

SIR WILFRID. Did you ever kiss him? I'll bet he fined you for

contempt of court. Look here, Mrs. Karslake, if you're marryin' a man you don't care about——

CYNTHIA *(amused and excusing his audacity as a foreigner's eccentricity).* Really!

SIR WILFRID. Well, I don't offer myself——

CYNTHIA. Oh!

SIR WILFRID. Not this instant——

CYNTHIA. Ah!

SIR WILFRID. But let me drop in tomorrow at tea.

CYNTHIA. What country and state of affairs do you think you have landed in?

SIR WILFRID. New York, by Jove! Been to school, too. New York is bounded on the North, South, East and West by the state of Divorce! Come, Mrs. Karslake, I like your country. You've no fear and no respect. No can't and lots of can. Here you all are, you see—your former husband, and your new husband's former wife—sounds like Ollendorf! Eh? So there you are, you see! But, jokin' apart—why do you marry him? Oh, well, marry him if you must! You can run around the corner and get a divorce afterwards——

CYNTHIA. I believe you think they throw one in with an ice-cream soda!

SIR WILFRID *(rising).* Damme, my lady, a marriage in your country is no more than a—eh—eh—what do you call 'em? A "thank you, ma'am." That's what an American marriage is—a "thank you, ma'am. Bump—bump—you're over it and on to the next.

CYNTHIA. You're an odd fish! What? I believe I like you!

SIR WILFRID. 'Course you do! You'll see me when I call tomorrow—at ten? We'll run down to Belmont Park, eh?

CYNTHIA. Don't be absurd!

VIDA *(she has finished her talk with* JOHN *and breaks in on* SIR WILFRID, *who has hung about* CYNTHIA *too long to suit her).* Tomorrow at twelve, Sir Wilfrid!

SIR WILFRID. Twelve!

VIDA *(shaking hands with* JOHN). Don't forget, Mr. Karslake—eleven o'clock tomorrow.

JOHN *(bowing assent).* I won't!

VIDA *(coming to the middle of the stage and speaking to* CYNTHIA). Oh, Mrs. Karslake, I've ordered Tiffany to send you something. It's a sugar bowl to sweeten the matrimonial lot! I suppose nothing would induce you to call?

CYNTHIA *(distantly and careless of offending).* Thanks, no—

that is, is "Cynthia K." (her saddle horse) really to be there at eleven? I'd give a gold mine to see her again.

VIDA. Do come!

CYNTHIA. If Mr. Karslake will accommodate me by his absence.

VIDA. Dear Mr. Karslake, you'll have to change your hour.

JOHN. Sorry, I'm not able to.

CYNTHIA. I can't come later, for I'm to be married.

JOHN. It's not as bad as that with me, but I am to be sold up—Sheriff, you know. Can't come later than eleven.

VIDA *(to* CYNTHIA). Any hour but eleven, dear.

CYNTHIA *(perfectly regardless of* VIDA *and ready to vex* JOHN *if possible).* Mrs. Phillimore, I shall call on you at eleven—to see Cynthia K. I thank you for the invitation. Good afternoon.

VIDA *(aside to* JOHN, *crossing to speak quietly to him).* It's mere bravado; she won't come.

JOHN. You don't know her.

(Pause. There is a general embarrassment. SIR WILFRID *plays with his eye-glass.* JOHN *is angry;* CYNTHIA *is triumphant;* MATTHEW *is embarrassed;* VIDA *is irritated; everybody is at odds.)*

A further light on what the author meant by the frivolity of the American attitude toward life is supplied by Karslake's conversation with Vida. He is telling her of his experience with Cynthia.

JOHN. There's nothing to tell. We met, we loved, we married, we parted; or at least we wrangled and jangled. *(Sighing.)* Ha! Why weren't we happy! Don't ask me why! It may have been *partly* my fault.

VIDA *(with tenderness).* Never!

JOHN *(his mind on* CYNTHIA). But I believe it's all in the way a girl's brought up. Our girls are brought up to be ignorant of life—they're ignorant of life. Life is a joke, and marriage is a picnic, and a man is a shawl-strap. 'Pon my soul, Cynthia Deane—no, I can't tell you.

(During the following he walks about in his irritation.)

VIDA *(gently).* Please tell me.

JOHN. Well, she was an heiress, an American heiress—she'd been taught to think marriage meant burnt almonds and moonshine and a yacht and three automobiles, and she thought—I don't know what she thought, but I tell you, Mrs. Phillimore, marriage is three parts love and seven parts forgiveness of sins.

VIDA *(flattering him as a matter of course).* She never loved you.

JOHN *(on whom she has made no impression at all).* Yes, she did. For six or seven months there was not a shadow between us.

It was perfect, and then one day she went off like a pistol-shot. I had a piece of law-work and couldn't take her to see Flashlight race the Maryland mare. The case meant a big fee and big Kudos, and in sails Cynthia, Flashlight-mad! And will I put on my hat and take her? No—and bang she goes off like a stick of dynamite—what did I marry her for? and words—pretty high words, until she got mad, when she threw over a chair, and said, oh, well—marriage was a failure, or it was with me, so I said she'd better try someone else. She said she would and marched out of the room.

VIDA *(gently sarcastic).* But she came back!

JOHN. She came back, but not as you mean. She stood at the door and said, "John, I shall divorce you." Then she came over to my study table, dropped her wedding ring on my law papers, and went out. The door shut, I laughed; the front door slammed, I damned. *(Pause. He crosses to the window.)* She never came back.

Eugene O'Neill

Unquestionably the most notable dramatist of the first quarter of the twentieth century in the United States is Eugene O'Neill. How much of his reputation is due to the fact that he happened to begin writing plays which shocked the general public in an age when the general public had developed an appetite for crude sensation cannot be determined until he and all his generation are dust; and probably not until their children are also dust. But even now it is safe to say that his roughness of theme and frankness of treatment are not the sole, perhaps not even the main cause of his success. If he does not have that rarest of qualities, creative genius, at least his inventive genius has touches of the creative spirit.

Clayton Hamilton said of O'Neill that he found all the "don'ts" of the theater, and did them. That would not necessarily indicate anything except a determination to be eccentric, but in O'Neill's case it happens to mean that he searches for the method that will best convey the idea he has in mind, and never asks whether or not it is customarily used. However, this disregard for the conventions of the stage does not rise out of ignorance of the theater, for he is the son of an actor of distinction, and was an actor himself, though not one of distinction.

His father was James O'Neill, who belonged to the days when actors toured the country instead of confining their performances to a few cities on the North Atlantic Seaboard with an occasional season in Chicago. *The Count of Monte Cristo* was one of O'Neill senior's best rôles. Eugene was born in 1888, and until he was seven traveled with his father and mother. When he was old enough to be sent to school this vagabondage ceased, but evidently he did not lose his taste for it. For a time he attended Princeton University, but he left the college after some small disagreement with its authorities, and in 1909 began his wanderings, which were to furnish him with so much material for his later writings.

He went as far as possible from Princeton on land—to San Francisco, and from that city he set out on a gold-

Eugene O'Neill

prospecting tour of Spanish Honduras with a mining engineer. However, when they were in Central America, O'Neill was stricken with tropical fever, and incapacitated for further travel toward an El Dorado. Out of this experience he later constructed his two short plays, *Gold* and *Where the Cross is Made.* Back in New York, he resumed his work in the theater. His father was leading man in *The White Sister,* in which Viola Allen was playing the title rôle, and William Farnum was also in the cast. It was a place to see good acting, if not anything inspiring in the way of a play. Eugene O'Neill was assistant stage manager. But instead of being inspired to act or to write a play by this contact with the bright lights of the theater, the young man was inspired to go to sea. One writer states that he became acquainted with Conrad's works that winter and they aroused his well-developed wander-lust again. At any rate, he went to South America on a Norwegian sailing vessel, worked at various things in different cities of the southern continent, shipped for South Africa and came back penniless to Buenos Aires, to live the life of a beachcomber for a season. Finally he got back to New York in the forecastle of a tramp steamer. After another voyage or two, he again worked a little while in the theater, this time in a vaudeville sketch with his father.

The elder O'Neill lived in New London, and he left his son there for the winter with an allowance just about sufficient to pay his board. Eugene had time on his hands and occupied it writing one-act plays. A friend sent two of these to Professor Baker of Harvard, and the result was that O'Neill entered the Harvard Dramatic Workshop and was the best of Dr. Baker's pupils.

There was no demand in the commercial theater for the one-act plays, which were what he had written. However, the Provincetown Players made his work known first in Provincetown and later in their McDougal Street playhouse in New York. He wrote *Beyond the Horizon* in 1917, but it was not produced until 1920, and then, rather accidentally, or incidentally. A manager had accepted the play and was going to produce it sometime when the time, the place and the cast should all arrive together. One of the cast had

arrived, and he made the time and place he was using for another play serve for this one. The actor was Richard Bennett, and he was playing popular melodrama. Few melodramas interest serious actors for six evenings and two afternoons every week, and Mr. Bennett was so bored that he began reading the plays in his manager's office for variety. When he came upon *Beyond the Horizon,* he decided to use it for some special matinees. The result was that O'Neill's play soon superseded the melodrama. The play received the Pulitzer prize, and since that time every commercial theater has been eager to produce whatever he wrote.

Anna Christie, The Emperor Jones, Diff'rent, The Straw, The Hairy Ape, Desire Under the Elms, All God's Chillun Got Wings, Marco Millions, Lazarus Laughed and *Strange Interlude* followed in rapid succession. *Anna Christie* and *Strange Interlude* both won the Pulitzer prize.

The people of O'Neill's dramas are not those one meets in other plays. Sailors in the forecastle, a Negro porter who made himself an emperor, a coal barge owner and his daughter, who is a prostitute; victims of tuberculosis, New Englanders who are slaves of avarice and lust, Marco Polo as an American "go-getter," a woman who, like a cannibal of souls, feeds her ego on the hearts of three men—these are strange people to appear on the boards of the commercial theater. Negroes are supposed to be funny in literature or the drama. O'Neill makes them figures of tragedy. There have been tragedies of American negro life before, but those tragedies were built upon the situations which grew out of the negro's relation to the white race. Emperor Jones is the tragedy of a primitive savage delivered into the power of his primitive superstition and fears.

There have been prostitutes of various social standing in plays, from Camille to Paula Tanqueray or Mrs. Warren. But other dramatists have written of their lives as they appear against the background of the conventional well-fed, well-dressed social circles. O'Neill has depicted life in water-front saloons and forecastles and sailors' resorts for itself. If it is brutal he does not depict that brutality for

Banquet Scene from "Marco Millions"

SCENE FROM "STRANGE INTERLUDE" AS PRODUCED BY THE THEATRE GUILD

its own sake, but because he is seeking the truth of life in all places.

He sees life steadily, but one cannot feel that he sees it whole. Clayton Hamilton points out one defect in his work. "A picture of life that leaves out hearty laughter is, to put the matter mildly, incomplete. He is not entirely devoid of humor, but his humor is of a rather grim sardonic type. He certainly lacks gaiety and that agreeable geniality which we are accustomed to expect of greatness. Let me remind you, in passing, that the creator of Macbeth, Othello and King Lear was also the creator of Falstaff and of Rosalind. Mr. O'Neill's work, as a whole, is not gloomy, but it is very grave. He is at his best when he is dealing with the terrible; and, by the terrible, I mean the horrible transfigured to a higher plane by the intercession of imagination."[2]

Of the "don'ts" which he ignores, some concern his material and some his technic. In an age when women comprise three-fourths of theater audiences, he writes plays without attractive feminine rôles, and on themes which are supposed to be of little interest to women.

The aside was supposed to have been done away with long ago. *Strange Interlude* was dubbed by one of the newspaper critics "the march of the wooden asides," for its distinctive method is that after each character has spoken, immediately, holding the same attitude as he had in the speech, that character speaks the thought in his mind. This makes the play five hours long instead of two and a half.

Mr. O'Neill's very popularity makes it hard to estimate his work. It must be said for him that he never writes with an eye on his audience. He has thought and felt deeply and independently about life and he has put his thought and feeling into plays. Perhaps he has written a better drama than *Beyond the Horizon.* Certainly this drama has all the qualities which make his work admirable, and rather fewer of those which are open to question than most of his later plays.

From Beyond the Horizon

The story of *Beyond the Horizon* is the simplest. Two brothers, sons of a New England farmer, are interested in

the same girl. Robert, the younger boy, has always been rather frail and when the story opens he is about to go with his uncle on a three-year sea voyage. Andrew, the elder, is a born farmer, quite satisfied with life as he finds it in New England, but Robert has always been lured by what is beyond the horizon. When Robert takes leave of Ruth, he finds that she thinks she is in love with him. She persuades him to stay at home. Andrew, upset by this news decides to sail with his uncle. He finds nothing attractive about travel except the opportunities to make money, and instead of being a producer, he becomes a speculator. Robert is utterly incapable of making the farm pay, and is a laughing stock of the neighborhood. Ruth tells him that she made a mistake, and that it is really Andrew whom she loves. She hopes that Andrew will take hold of the farm when he comes back after three years, make it pay, and marry her, after she has divorced Robert. But Andrew in the friendliest fashion tells her that he found out before he had been away a month that he really never cared for her. He is called away before he has really had time to find out much about the farm and he does not come back from Argentine for five years. Then he finds the farm gone to rack and ruin, Robert at death's door with tuberculosis, and Ruth sunk into a hopeless lethargy. When he cannot succeed in rousing any hope in Robert, Ruth tells Andrew that she cannot help Robert, because she told him, five years ago that it was Andrew she loved. Andrew, furious, demands that she tell Robert she was mistaken; that it was Robert she loved. But he dies before she tells him, his last words being an appeal to Andy to take care of Ruth. But Ruth is beyond the "further troubling of any hope:" not dead, but with all desire and interest dead within her.

Here is a plot without any striking adventures, or unusual incidents. There are no witty lines, no "types," no comic relief, no villain, and no hero. Nothing could be more different from the New England farmers of such plays as *Shore Acres, Way Down East* or *The Old Homestead.* These Mayos are no kin to Jonathan of *The Contrast.* Yet farming is a part of the play, the basis of the plot. It is the determining force of two lives. It ruins both the man

who tried to follow it without any aptitude for it, and the one who forsook it, though born to it.

The play is not interesting because any of the characters amuse, nor does the reader wish fervently for the triumph of any over the others. It is the sincerity and the truthfulness which give it is power. In this ordinary chronicle of ordinary people great emotions find expression. It widens one's knowledge of life, and that is the final test of literature, whether for the stage or the book.

The Mayos' sitting room in the first act is a picture of them. "Everything in the room is clean, well kept and in its exact place, yet there is no suggestion of primness about the whole. Rather the atmosphere is one of the orderly comfort of a simple, hard-earned prosperity, enjoyed and maintained by the family as a unit." The changes in this room reflect the change in the life of the family. At the end of three years, when Andrew is expected back, the stage direction reads: "The room has changed, not so much in its outward appearance as in its general atmosphere. Little significant details give evidence of carelessness, of inefficiency, of an industry gone to seed. The chairs appear shabby from lack of paint; the table-cover is spotted and askew; holes show in the curtains; a child's doll with one arm gone lies under the table; a hoe stands in a corner; a man's coat is flung on the couch in the rear; the desk is cluttered with odds and ends; a number of books are piled carelessly on the sideboard. The noon enervation of the scorching day seems to have penetrated indoors, causing even inanimate objects to wear an aspect of despondent exhaustion."

Andrew's second visit, five years after his first homecoming, brings him into the same room, but one utterly different from the place where he said good-bye on the day when he took his brother's place on his uncle's vessel. "The room, seen by the light of the shadeless oil lamp with a smoky chimney, which stands on the table, presents an appearance of decay, of dissolution. The curtains at the windows are torn and dirty, and one of them is missing. The closed desk is gray with accumulated dust, as if it had not been used for years. Blotches of dampness disfigure the

wall-paper. Threadbare trails, leading to the kitchen and outer doors, show in the faded carpet. The top of a coverless table is stained with imprints of hot dishes and spilt food. The rung of one rocker has been clumsily mended with a piece of plain board. A brown coating of rust covers the unblackened stove. A pile of wood is stacked up carelessly against the wall by the stove.

"The whole atmosphere of the room, contrasted with that of former years, is one of habitual poverty, too hopelessly resigned to be any longer ashamed or even conscious of itself."

The scenes between the brothers are characteristic. In the first act they are discussing Robert's going away, sitting out on the rail fence at twilight.

ANDREW *(after a while)*. Ma's going to miss you a lot, Rob.

ROBERT. Yes—and I'll miss her.

ANDREW. And Pa ain't feeling none too happy to have you go—though he's been trying not to show it.

ROBERT. I can see how he feels.

ANDREW. And you can bet I'm not giving any cheers about it. *(He puts his hand on the fence near Robert.)*

ROBERT *(putting one hand on top of* ANDREW'S *with a gesture of almost shyness)*. I know that, too, Andy.

ANDREW. I'll miss you as much as anybody, I guess. I know how lonesome the old place was winter before last, when you was away to college—and even then you used to come home once in a while; but this time—*(he stops suddenly)*.

ROBERT. Let's not think of it—'til afterward. We'll only spoil our last night if we do.

ANDREW. That's good advice. *(But after a short pause he returns to the subject again.)* You see, you and I ain't like most brothers—always fighting and separated a lot of the time, while we've always been together—just the two of us. It's different with us. That's why it hits so hard, I guess.

ROBERT *(with feeling)*. It's just as hard for me, Andy—believe that! I hate to leave you and the folks—but—I feel I've got to. There's something calling me *(he points to the horizon)*—calling me from over there, beyond—and I feel as if—no matter what happens—Oh, I just can't explain it to you, Andy.

ANDREW. No need to, Rob *(angry at himself)*. You needn't try to explain. It's just as it ought to be. Hell! You want to

go. You feel you ought to, and you've *got* to—that's all there is to it; and I wouldn't have you miss this chance for the world.

ROBERT. It's fine of you to feel that way, Andy.

(ANDREW *explains that he is certainly glad for his brother to have a chance to grow perfectly well and strong, but* ROBERT *says that if he had no excuse but his health he would stay on the farm and start in plowing).*

ANDREW. Can't be done. No use your talking that way, Rob. Farming ain't your nature. There's all the difference shown in just the way us two feel about the farm. I like it, all of it, and you—well, you like the home part of it I expect; but as a place to work and grow things, you'd hate it. Ain't that right?

ROBERT. Yes, I suppose it is. I've tried to take an interest, but—well, you're the Mayo branch of the family, and I take after Ma and Uncle Dick. It's natural enough when you come to think of it. The Mayos have been farmers from way back, while the Scotts have been mostly sea-faring folks, with a school teacher thrown in now and then on the woman's side—just as Ma was before her marriage.

ANDREW. You do favor Ma. I remember she used always to have her nose in a book when I was a kid; but she seems to have given it up of late years.

ROBERT *(with a trace of bitterness).* The farm claimed her in spite of herself. That's what I'm afraid it might do to me in time; and that's why I feel I ought to get away. *(Fearing he has hurt* ANDREW'S *feelings)* You mustn't misunderstand me, Andy. For you it's a different thing. You're a Mayo through and through. You're wedded to the soil. You're as much a product of it as an ear of corn is, or a tree. Father is the same. The farm is his life-work, and he's happy in knowing that another Mayo, inspired by the same love, will take up the work where he leaves off. I can understand your attitude and Pa's; and I think it's wonderful and sincere. But I—well, I'm not made that way.

Andrew imagines that Rob is interested in business opportunities, but the younger boy says: "Supposing I was to tell you that it's just beauty that's calling me, the beauty of the far-off and unknown, the mystery and spell of the East which lures me in the books I've read, the need of the freedom of the great wide spaces, the joy of wandering on and on—in quest of the secret which is hidden just over there beyond the horizon? Suppose I told you that was my

one and only reason for going?" To this Andrew's characteristic response is, "I should say you were nutty."

The strong affection of the two brothers is unshaken by Ruth's choice of Rob when everyone expected her to marry Andrew. When their father, hurt beyond self-control at Andrew's going to sea in Rob's place, says he will never speak to the elder boy again, Rob vainly tries to bring his father to reason. This quarrel, so devastating to the family unity, which had hitherto been unbroken, only brings the boys nearer together. Theirs was a love which could weather the severest criticism. Nothing proves this more strongly than the scene when Andrew comes to the farm in response to Ruth's message that Rob is pretty low with "lung trouble." Andrew came immediately from New York and brought a specialist along. The doctor examined Rob and told Andrew that the sick man had perhaps a few days to live and perhaps only a few hours. In vain Andrew suggested every possible expedient, change of climate. All the doctor would admit him to hope for was "that last chance—the miracle." He added, "We doctors see it happen too often to disbelieve in it."

When Andrew had accompanied the doctor to his car he came back into the cheerless room and asked Ruth if they had not better go into see Rob. "God, I'm afraid to! I know he'll read it in my face," he says, and at this moment the bedroom door is noiselessly opened and Robert appears in the doorway. His cheeks are flushed with fever and his eyes appear unusually large and brilliant. Andrew continues with a groan: "It can't be, Ruth. It can't be as hopeless as he said. There's always a fighting chance. We'll take Rob to Arizona. He's *got* to get well. There *must* be a chance!"

ROBERT *(in a gentle tone).* Why must there, Andy? (RUTH *turns and stares at him with terrified eyes.)*

ANDREW *(whirling around).* Rob! *(Scoldingly)* What are you doing out of bed? *(He gets up and goes to him.)* Get right back now and obey the Doc, or you're going to get a licking from me.

ROBERT *(ignoring these remarks).* Help me over to the chair, please, Andy.

ANDREW. Like hell, I will! You're going right back to bed, that's where you're going, and stay there! *(He takes hold of* ROBERT'S *arm.)*

ROBERT *(mockingly).* Stay there 'til I die, eh, Andy, *(Coldly).* Don't behave like a child. I'm sick of lying down. I'll be more rested sitting up. *(As* ANDREW *hesitates—violently),* I swear I'll get out of bed every time you put me there. You'll have to sit on my chest, and that won't help my health any. Come on, Andy. Don't play the fool. I want to talk to you, and I'm going to. *(With a grim smile),* A dying man has some rights, hasn't he?

ANDREW *(with a shudder).* Don't talk that way, for God's sake. I'll only let you sit down if you'll promise that. Remember. *(He helps* ROB *to the chair between his own and* RUTH'S.) Easy now! There you are! Wait, and I'll get a pillow for you. *(He goes into the bedroom.* ROBERT *looks at* RUTH, *who shrinks away from him in terror.* ROBERT *smiles bitterly.* ANDREW *comes back with the pillow and places it behind* ROBERT'S *back.)* How's that?

ROBERT *(with an affectionate smile).* Fine! Thank you! *(As* ANDY *sits down.)* Listen, Andy. You've asked me not to talk—and I won't after I've made my position clear. *(Slowly.)* In the first place I know I'm dying. (RUTH *bows her head and covers her face with her hands. She remains like this all during the scene between the two brothers.)*

ANDREW. Rob! That isn't so!

ROBERT *(wearily).* It is so! Don't lie to me. It's useless, and it irritates me. After Ruth put me to bed before you came, I saw it clearly for the first time. *(Bitterly.)* I'd been making plans for our future—Ruth's and mine—so it came hard at first—the realization. Then when the doctor examined me, I knew—though he tried to lie about it. And then to make sure, I listened at the door to what he told you. So for my sake don't mock me with fairy tales about Arizona, or any such rot as that. Because I'm dying is no reason why you should treat me as an imbecile or a coward. Now I'm sure what's happening, I can say Kismet to it with all my heart. It's only the silly uncertainty that hurt. *(There is a pause.* ANDREW *looks around in impotent anguish, not knowing what to say.* ROBERT *regards him with an affectionate smile.)*

ANDREW *(finally blurts out).* It isn't foolish. You *have* got a chance. If you heard all the doctor said that ought to prove it to you.

ROBERT. Oh, you mean when he spoke about the possibility of a miracle? *(Dryly.)* The Doctor and I disagree on that point. I don't believe in miracles—in my case. Besides I know more than

any doctor on earth *could* know—because I *feel* what's coming. *(Dismissing the subject.)* But we've agreed not to talk about it. Tell me about yourself, Andy, and what you've done all these years. That's what I'm interested in. Your letters were too brief and too far apart to be illuminating.

ANDREW. I meant to write oftener.

ROBERT *(with a faint trace of irony)*. I judge from them you've accomplished all you set out to five years ago?

ANDREW. That isn't much to boast of.

ROBERT *(surprised)*. Have you really, honestly reached that conclusion?

ANDREW. Well, it doesn't seem to amount to much now.

ROBERT. But you're rich, aren't you?

ANDREW *(with a quick glance at* RUTH.) Yes, I s'pose so.

ROBERT. I'm glad. You can do to the farm all I've undone. *(With a smile.)* Do you know I was too proud to ask you for money when things went bad here? You'll have to forgive me for that, Andy.

ANDREW. I knew it wasn't like you to feel that way.

ROBERT. But what did you do down there? Tell me. You went in the grain business with that friend of yours?

ANDREW. Yes. After two years I had a share in it. I sold out last year. *(He is answering* ROB'S *questions with great reluctance.)*

ROBERT. And then?

ANDREW. I went in on my own.

ROBERT. Your own business?

ANDREW. I s'pose you'd call it that.

ROBERT. Still in grain?

ANDREW. Yes.

ROBERT. What's the matter? What's there to be ashamed of? You look as if I was accusing you of crimes.

ANDREW. I'm proud enough of the first four years. It's after that I'm not boasting of. You see, I could make money easy enough that way, so I took to speculating.

ROBERT. In wheat?

ANDREW. Yes.

ROBERT. And you made money—gambling?

ANDREW. Yes.

ROBERT. I can't imagine you as one of the easy-come, easy-go kind.

ANDREW. I'm not. I'm sick of it.

ROBERT *(thoughtfully)*. I've been wondering what the great change was in you. I can see now. It's your eyes. There's an

expression about them as if you were constantly waiting to hear a cannon go off, and wincing at the bang beforehand.

ANDREW *(grimly)*. I've felt just that way all the past year.

ROBERT *(after a pause during which his eyes search* ANDREW'S *face)*. Why haven't you ever married?

ANDREW. Never wanted to. Didn't have time to think of it, I guess.

ROBERT *(after a pause)*. You—a farmer—to gamble in a wheat pit with scraps of paper. There's a spiritual significance in that picture, Andy. *(He smiles bitterly.)* I'm a failure, and Ruth's another—but we can both justly lay some of the blame for our stumbling on God. But you're the deepest dyed failure of the three, Andy. You've spent eight years running away from yourself. Do you see what I mean? You used to be a creator when you loved the farm. You and life were in harmonious partnership. And now—*(He stops as if seeking vainly for words)*. My brain is muddled. But part of what I mean is that your gambling with the thing you used to love to create proves how far astray you've gotten from the truth. So you'll be punished. You'll have to suffer to win back—*(His voice grows weaker and he sighs wearily)*. It's no use. I can't say it. *(He lies back and closes his eyes, breathing pantingly.)*

ANDREW *(slowly)*. I think I know what you're driving at, Rob—and it's true, I guess. (ROBERT *smiles gratefully and stretches out his hand, which* ANDREW *takes in his.)*

ROBERT. I want you to promise me to do one thing, Andy, after——

ANDREW. I'll promise anything, as God is my Judge!

ROBERT. Remember, Andy, Ruth has suffered double her share, and you haven't suffered at all. *(His voice faltering with weakness.)* Only through contact with suffering, Andy, will you—awaken. Listen. You must marry Ruth—afterwards.

Rob goes into his room again to lie down and then Andrew asks Ruth why, since Rob must have known that Andy would provide for her, the dying man should have wanted him to marry her. Ruth replies that Rob is probably thinking of something which happened five years ago. And in a brief dialogue, which yet gives the effect of something painfully and slowly dragged up from agonizing memories, she tells Andy that she had never really loved Rob, that even the birth of their child, now dead, did not

make her care, and that finally when Rob's shiftlessness annoyed her to desperation, she told him the truth. When Andy, infuriated and beside himself with anxiety, insists that Ruth go in and tell Rob something to make his last hours easier, she comes out of the room with the news that Rob is not there.

The final scene is out on the road, where the play began. There Andy and Ruth overtake Rob, who has come out to die under the open sky of dawn. The beauty which lured him beyond the horizon is still beckoning and he dies exulting that now at last there is nothing to keep him from following it.

ROBERT. Isn't it beautiful beyond the hills? I can hear the old voices calling me to come—*(exultingly)*. And this time I'm going—I'm free. It isn't the end. It's a free beginning. The start of my voyage! Don't you see? I've won my trip—the right of release—beyond the horizon! Oh, you ought to be glad—glad—for my sake!

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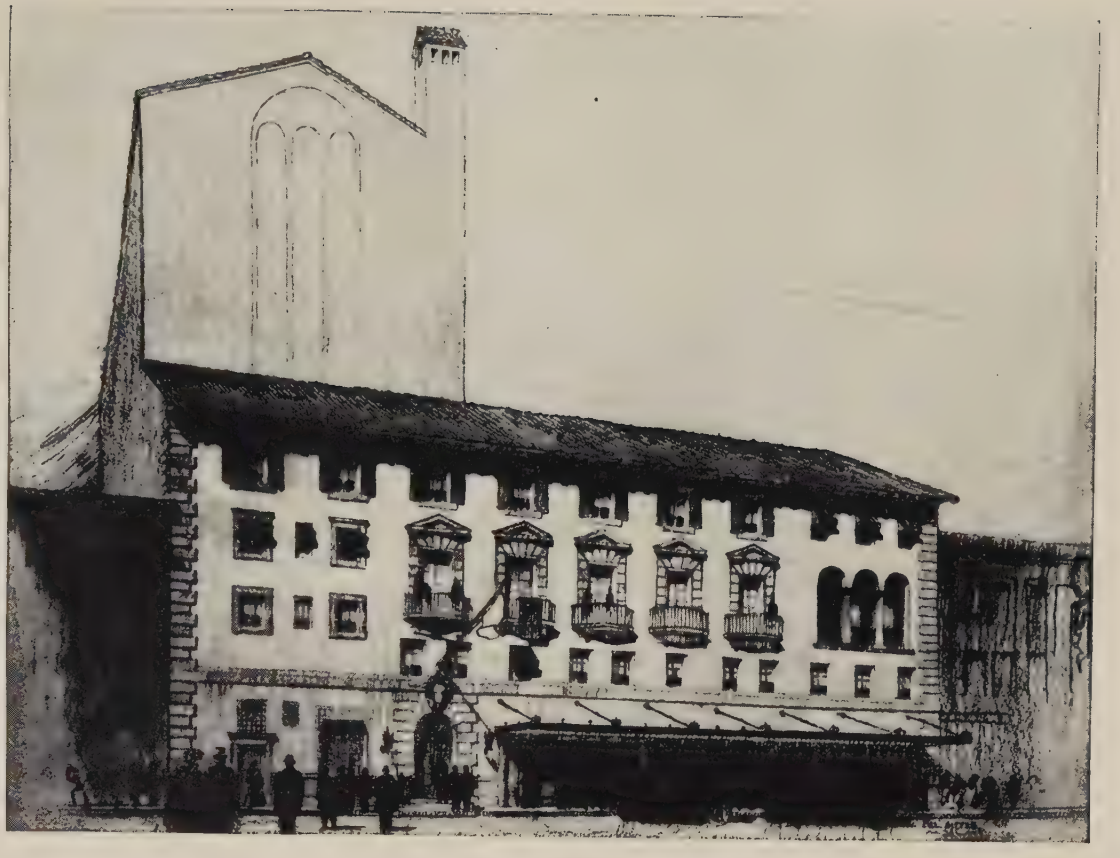
[1] Montrose J. Moses: *Representative Plays by American Dramatists.*
[2] *Conversations on Contemporary Drama,* 214.



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